

SEPTEMBER, 1923

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The SMART SET

Edited by
George Jean Nathan
and
H.L. Mencken.

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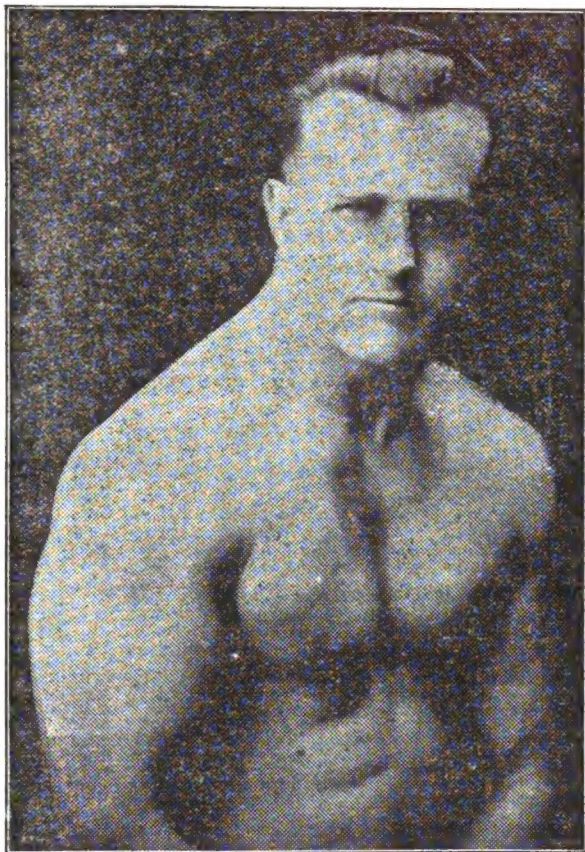
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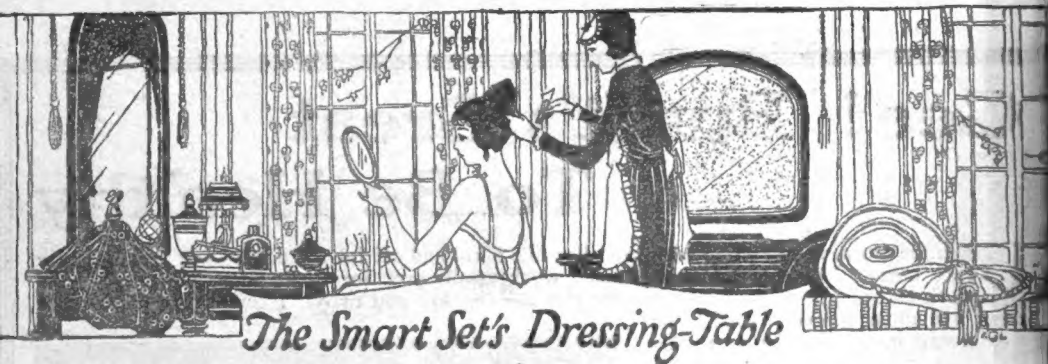
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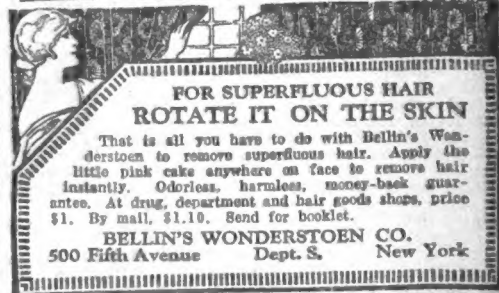
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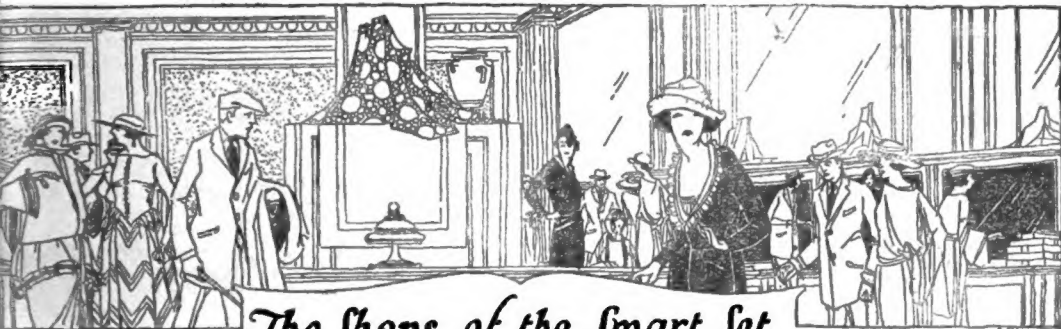
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"A Part of the Institution"
By Ruth Suckow
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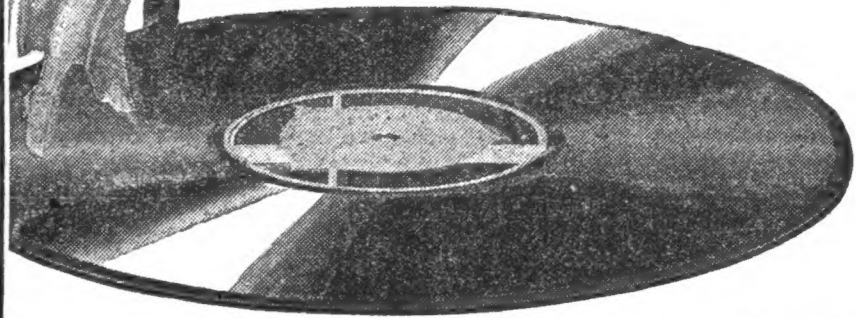
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The
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The Immortal

By George Sterling

WHEN Alexan, the great poet, died, he found himself surrounded by shades eager to praise him. And among them was the shade of the girl whose love he had given up, to write finer sonnets.

"You see!" she cried. "Was it not better to have taken love where it was possible to you?"

"No," he replied. "Do you not see that I am famous even here? Look how they crowd around and gaze at me."

"Just wait awhile!" answered the girl.

Alexan waited, and year by year the other shades paid less and less attention to him; but he did not mind that, for new shades crossed daily the threshold of eternity, many

of whom demanded a sight of the master poet.

"You see!" he exclaimed triumphantly to the girl.

"Wait a little longer," said she.

Alexan waited, and after a few centuries, as time is reckoned on earth, he found that fewer and fewer souls craved a sight of him. They became less and less in number, till at last only the souls of grey scholars seemed to know that he had ever lived and sung. And at last there was none, even, of these.

"Perhaps you were right," said Alexan to the girl.

But she only laughed, with the thin laughter of the dead, which is like echoes breaking on the rough edge of shadows.



Time

By Marion Carroll

I

THE old square lay dim and odorous in the summer night, haunted by ghosts of lilac-fragrance. So late was the hour that the few benches were untenanted, and only the footfall of an infrequent passerby broke the warm silence.

Then, the crash of a door shut violently, and a tall youth came down the steps of a house abutting on the square, drifted rather than strode to the nearest bench, and sat there trembling.

"Ah! God!" he said at last. And after a long interval, "Ah! God! The marvel of it!"

Suddenly he drew from a pocket of his coat a pad of paper and a lead pencil. Tears in his eyes, he wrote hastily, and half blindly; then, tearing the page from tablet, crushed it in his hand and dashed it to the grass.

"Words! Words!" he muttered. "Of what use are mere words?" And again he bowed his head in his hands, trembling with wonderment. For hours he sat there, leaving only when the first intimations of dawn touched the spires of the city.

Officer McQuillan, on his rounds, had seen him there, and scrutinized him with suspicion. Now, going over to the abandoned bench, he noted the crumpled paper, and read in bewilderment the few crazily scrawled lines.

*Like a Titan exulting to pulses of infinite rhyme,
Like a god in his youth on the terrible morning of Time,
I have come from your lyric embrace.
From the star of your face.*

*Go rays that are swords in the carveling joy
of my heart.*

*Oh, marvelous more is the dream that we
never shall part,*

When at last—Christ! at last!—we are one!

Oh, loveliness clothed with the sun!

Oh, madness and grace

Of your silence and ——

The words died off. Officer McQuillan read them again, after his fashion, and snorted.

"Shure, th' nuts ain't all dead yet—not by a cell full!"

He recrumpled the paper, cast it underfoot, and plodded on painfully.

II

Again it was late at night in the old square, but it was an autumn of the lonesome later years, and the pavement knew no more the footfall of Officer McQuillan, who had been promoted and was now a captain of police and half owner in an illicit distillery.

But the waning moon, they say, is very wise, and she may have identified as the young poet the stoop-shouldered man, with greying head, who was pacing the old square at as far a distance as possible from a dwelling on its opposite side. The night was chill, a biting wind having come down from the north, and he had to stride briskly to keep warmth in his spare body. At last even his exertion seemed inadequate for this, and he walked, with dragging steps, toward the old mansion, where a single light gleamed in a third-story window.

"O hell!" he soliloquized. "I guess I'll have to go in! She's still up!"

Young Adventure

By Paul Tanaquil

I

THE first thing Maurice did, as soon as the train had pulled out of Grenoble, was to take his thumb, which he had been bravely sucking, out of his mouth. Then he stretched his legs out in front of him, bringing his feet against the side of the black serge dress of the woman seated opposite him in the compartment. He noticed that some of the dirt off the soles of his shoes had passed onto the lady's skirt and he was sorry that the result was an indiscriminate accumulation rather than a pattern. It would have been fun to trace on this sombre drawing-board the pattern of a fish, or, by using both feet, to make the outline of the roof of a house. Still, even at that, it was exciting and amusing to be doing what he was, unobserved and undetected.

The operation continued a few moments and then grew stale. Maurice looked diagonally across the compartment at his Uncle Robert and at Philippe, his brother. Uncle Robert, puffing on a great pipe, was explaining to Philippe about school in England. Maurice caught a few words above the rattle of the train. It seemed that the boys were to be called by their last names, and that Philippe would have to keep an eye on his younger brother without mollycoddling him. This last admonition failed to interest Maurice. Philippe, anyhow, being twelve years old, was always too ready to guide or restrain Maurice. If the elder found Maurice's actions reprehensible it was

either because they were of a boldness beyond his imagination or because part and parcel of the privileges conferred by two years' seniority was to sit in judgment.

Sometimes, thought Maurice, his brother was swept off his feet and therefore incapable of understanding at all; sometimes he was just a whit jealous at his own lack of imagination and initiative; sometimes he gloried in the following of the thing called duty. This thing called duty amounted to interference with other people's fantasy and, by virtue of interference, the glow of righteousness and the superiority of conformance. Maurice knew the sensation; some few times in his life he had tried it on his sister, who was two years younger. But more frequently he had preferred to improve on her schemes of mischief by enlarging their play, and her thrill of admiration had procured him a keener satisfaction.

At any rate, Maurice consoled himself, school in England would be just as new for Philippe as for himself; nor would Philippe, during the days of unfamiliarity, attempt to govern him. It would be only when Philippe knew well enough what was the thing to do that he would quarrel with Maurice about the latter's breaches and point out other people's observance. Until then, Maurice would be free to go his own sweet way uncounseled.

He was sorry he had not read some of the books on English school life that Philippe had so eagerly devoured. There was one called "Tom Gaston of Highfield College" that Philippe

seemed to have enjoyed particularly; but the drawing on the gaudy paper-cover (it represented four boys facing an angry bull whose very snort had been reproduced by the artist, and the four boys were dressed even more amazingly than choristers, more foolishly than even that ass, Michel Durand, when he acted some soppy part at his sister's wedding) annoyed him intensely; and the book itself was printed on the same kind of paper as those Hortense, the sub-assistant-maid, used to read in her attic. Perhaps, thought Maurice, if he had looked more closely into this English literature, he would already have been in a measure armed with some knowledge of the conditions he was to face. But Philippe had never quoted any of the things he had learned from "Tom Gaston of Highfield College," so it was likely that he did not actually lay much faith in that elaborate chronicle.

Maurice's thoughts turned suddenly back to Grenoble as the train made its first stop. He was leaving home, no! he had left home. He would not see his father again for several months; there would be no reading, out in the garden, as last summer, when he had so earnestly followed his father's words to reach the world of Don Quixote, of D'Artagnan and of Tartarin de Tarascon. He would not run to the kitchen to tell the cook that the postman had told André, the second man, that she was a fine woman, and how he, Maurice, had heard him; nor would the cook, all smiles and titters, give him a glass of sherry and a piece of cake or allow him to scrape the pot in which she had been making icing.

There would be no more scudding along the floor of the huge attic on sleighs, while Admiral Maurice reviewed his fleet, or the Grand Duke Maurice fled Siberian wolves, or just plain Maurice won the Grand Prix de l'Automobile in his trusty, self-designed racer, *La Grenobloise*. There

would be no more spinning of tops on the pavement, no more buying cakes on tic at the *pâtisseries*—"You may charge it to my father, the Senator!"—no more sleighing in winter, since the Christmas holidays would be spent in Paris. It was a whole world he was divorcing, and it was so pleasant a world that even the prospect of novelty could not interest him sufficiently keenly.

Besides, he was losing his personality; at school, according to Uncle Robert, he would no longer be Maurice, but just a family name, just like his brother. That was very unjust. Why was his name what it was? Because his father was a big man, a Senator, a person whose discussions advanced the affairs of the country? That, Maurice had to take on faith, for his visits to the Senate last July had been diaphoretic and soporific. Yet everybody was named after his father, and everybody's father was not a big man. Why should not girls be named after their mothers? Why, if it was true that his mother had suffered so much in giving his sister birth that it had cost her her life, should that sister not have been named after her as stones and buildings and statues were dedicated to people who had given their lives in a good cause? Or perhaps the cause was not good? But then why did God let her die? A rummy world!

The lady across the way, who had been gazing out of the window, looked through her veil at Maurice. He returned her glance, noticing as he did so that she had nice eyes. She might be pretty and she might not; Maurice did not have any set standards by which to judge beauty; but he did know she appealed to him as *sympathique*. He began to feel sorry for his rudeness and to observe that her dress, though black, was good-looking. Naturally, she would have been better in orange or mauve or light green—colors he liked above all others—but she appeared to be a

pleasant lady and he was sorry he had wiped his feet on her dress.

Out of the corner of his eye he saw his Uncle Robert and Philippe still deep in a discussion of etiquette at an English school. Uncle Robert had never been to England and yet he seemed to speak with an assurance lesser only to that Maurice's father exhaled. The thick clouds of smoke proceeding from his pipe hid his face. Maurice looked at the lady again. She seemed to be fiddling about with her veil and then she lifted it over the bridge of her long, straight, whimsical nose. Her eyes seemed dancing with humor, though there was nothing out of the ordinary to delight her. He concluded that her smile of radiant gaiety was habitual. Deliberately he moved his feet forward again, observing her while he did so. They were moving across; they should be reaching her; what was the matter? Ah!

"*Pardon, madame!*" he smiled as he spoke to her and bent down to shake the dust from her skirt, "*Je vous demande bien pardon, Madame, je suis tellement maladroit!*"

She flashed him an adorable smile, assured him it did not matter at all, making him feel as though she actually enjoyed it, that it had often happened to her, in fact that she would have been hurt if, in the course of a journey, some fellow-traveler had been so remiss as to fail to wipe his feet on her dress.

II

THEY engaged in conversation. He told her how he was on his way to school in England; how he would stop in Paris a day or two with his uncle; how, after buying clothes for himself and his brother in London—their clothes, it seemed, were quite impossible in an English school, so Mr. Briggs, the *lecteur d'Anglais* at the University of Grenoble had told Senator Frère—they were to go to Brighton, to school.

"Brighton!" said the lady, with a smile; "but it is a lovely place. I go there every spring; to the Métropole Hôtel! It is more like a French *plage* than any other town in England!"

Maurice told her:

"We will not be allowed to see the town. Mr. Briggs said to Father that we would have to stay in the school-grounds all the time, unless we have to go to the dentist!"

She sympathized:

"*Brighton est pourtant si joli!*"

"I shall arrange to have to go to the dentist," Maurice assured her, "and then, probably, my father will come to get me at Christmas time!"

Philippe edged along the seat a little nearer to them. He would never have dared begin a conversation with a stranger, but since Maurice had done it and Uncle Robert, half-asleep behind the slowly dispersing cloud of tobacco smoke that enveloped him, did not appear to object, he would join in.

"Your brother is older than you?" asked the lady with a glance at Philippe.

The latter nodded, and Maurice hastily interpolated:

"Yes, my brother is older in years!"

He wanted the lady to gather from his tone that by pure accident Philippe had been born previous to him, but that experience and knowledge had contributed to efface the difference in age. He hoped she recognized that, although she gave no sign. But he did not dare frame the thought in words. It would likely mean another quarrel with Philippe and the loss of Maurice's temper. This he refused to allow. She was his lady, anyhow; who had discovered her if not himself? He did not mind her being friendly to Philippe, but it must not be forgotten whose she was.

Uncle Robert presently joined in the conversation. It appeared that she and Maurice's uncle knew all manner of places the boys had not heard of: Dieppe, Trouville; Dinard,

Jersey. The lady always explained to the boys what was especially beautiful about these towns, whether it was the *digue* or the *jetée* or the *plage* itself or the *casino*. England was mentioned and Uncle Robert displayed sufficient familiarity with the customs of the country, the foibles of the inhabitants and the beauty of the landscape to avoid being asked if he had been there.

Time passed and as the train pushed on, mile after mile, Maurice knew he was getting farther and farther from Grenoble, but he did not care. Admiral Maurice, Duke Maurice and Maurice the Racer faded from his mind, like impalpable ghosts that had entered his dream, persuaded him of their past existence and then vanished slowly into the shadowy realms whence they had come. The sunlight playing on the lady's face was far more actual and golden than the exploits of Maurice's beloved hero. Here, delightful to see, was something at once beautiful and real, tangible, alive; as he looked at her, suddenly he knew that the torpedo that had once so direly threatened the life of Admiral Maurice was but a waste-paper-basket purchased at Garrigues' in the Grand' Rue; that the pack of snarling wolves were but worn-out coats stacked up in the semi-obscurity of the attic to be the plaything of a little boy; that *La Grenobloise*, queen of the velodromes of Europe, was an old sleigh dragged out every winter when they went to the mountains. Things were different now: he lived in the world of Dulcinea and Madame Bonacieux; Grenoble, Uncle Robert, school, holidays, Eton collars and bowler-hats dropped far down into the pools of oblivion, and, when their splash was over and the surface of the water was a mirror of stillness, the face reflected in it was the pretty lady's.

Maurice started suddenly out of his reverie. The first dinner was being served; Uncle Robert had told them to come along; he had invited

the pretty lady to join them. Maurice reached out and took her by the hand.

III

WHEN Maurice finally reached Brighton, said a last wistful good-bye to Uncle Robert and entered school; when the charm of novelty or its surprises, at least, wore off; when the memories that had seemed so very distant and childish returned all the more poignant and vivid for their temporary banishment, Maurice was very unhappy. He went through the daily routine of school in a dream. Sometimes he would think of the old days at Grenoble, sometimes he would recall the pretty lady and wonder if ever he would see her again, sometimes he would think of practically nothing. He was distraught and perplexed.

He was the bottom boy of the school: Frère II., and his number was 48. When the boys lined up for meals, he was the last in line; when they were seated at table, his place was the end one, on the outside of the horseshoe. He ate almost under the very eye of the headmaster: had he thrown a piece of bread in the air, it must have landed on Mr. Dawson-Meers or on the Matron or on the trained-nurse, Miss Villard. Mr. Dawson-Meers was a Charterhouse and Cambridge man; an English gentleman; fond of sports, schooled to believe, yet never consciously show, that the British Empire was the nearest thing to Heaven that the human brain might conceive.

Indeed, the strength of the British Empire's grandeur was so formidable that Maurice verily believed Mr. Dawson-Meers was skeptical as to Heaven's existence; still, being an Englishman and therefore one of the elect, Mr. Dawson-Meers allowed himself the Briton's pleasure of grumbling at the fools in Parliament, the idiots in the Cabinet, those harri-dans the Suffragettes, anything, in fact, outside of the Public Schools,

Oxford and Cambridge, the late Marquess of Salisbury, British motor-cars, the Army and Navy and finally the symbol thereof, His Majesty the King. Rumor among the boys had it that the headmaster had been presented at Court; but this somehow failed to impress Maurice, though **Frère I. exclaimed** that it was simply splendid to have such a man at the head of the school.

"He's really an old stink-pot!" said the boys, "but he was a Rowing Blue at Cambridge and he's no end of a blood!"

Mr. Dawson-Meers was distinctly a personality, though he knew small Latin and less Greek. He taught the next-to-last form Latin and heard them recite poetry once a week. He took the entire five forms of the school, form by form, once a week, in Geography. His wrath was to be feared, himself never to be understood; it was always very bewildering.

The Matron was merely a house-keeper. Often she caught boys in the private wing of the house—which included her apartments, the Nurse's and the drawing-room where visitors and parents saw the boys—and reported them to the headmaster. They would be reprimanded or caned. So no one had any use at all for this hard little chimpanzee-like woman. Blair, a friend of Maurice's, swore he had caught her in the arms of the headmaster. Maurice was thrilled until he knew Blair better; then he admired the imagination that gave rise to the tale.

As for the Nurse, one went to her for medicaments—a shin bruised at football, a black eye or a toothache. If, when the fine weather came, Maurice wanted to see the town of Brighton, he would have to interview Nurse and obtain leave to go to the dentist's. For the present, however, Nurse was merely a large person who sat rather near him—he on one side, she the other, of the gulf that separated Staff and School—

and whose inner parts kept up a constant volley of long rumbles running up and down the gamut of human sound.

Among the forty-eight boys, Maurice's familiar acquaintances were the six odd boys in his class. They included two foreigners: Unibuzu, a Peruvian, and Rogers, an American. Besides these boys and **Frère I. and II.**, there were in the whole school perhaps three other foreigners, all older boys. Mr. Dawson-Meers' attitude toward them was one of courtesy—that is, as near courtesy as was possible for him. One sensed, however, that in his insistence that they should suddenly forget birth, childhood and environment, and think and be exactly like their fellows, he held them inferior. They were just not British. So they must be made as nearly British as could be.

A hundred little details in Maurice annoyed him. He did not like the way he waved his hands when he spoke, the flourishes he made when he wrote, the manner in which he pronounced the letter R, the fact that he seemed to find something comic about a British school. **Frère I.** was a fine boy, thought Mr. Dawson-Meers; he was picking things up and adapting himself perfectly to circumstances; in time he could try for a Modern Language Scholarship at Harrow and later an Exhibition at Cambridge, bringing glory to Manford School. But **Frère II.** was a lazy young devil; he loafed most of the time and he was hard to understand; he mooned off on his own too much and did not begin to grasp the elements of football.

A slacker, that's what he was; and Mr. Dawson-Meers' business was to knock it out of him. At the end of the four years or so that Maurice was destined to spend at Manford, Mr. Dawson-Meers would have made him into something. Even being told how fine a start **Frère I.** had made, did not seem to move the youngster to appreciation; instead he smiled al-

most insolently, shifted from one foot to the other, looked on the ground, and assured the headmaster he knew his brother would get on in the world. As if a little brat of ten had any right to have an opinion. On anything except his lack of humanity! And he was grubby, too: dirty hands, rumpled collar, tie not tied decently.

Maurice took to Rogers, the American, very kindly. In him he saw an independence of spirit. Rogers, of course, never got caned, because he was keen on his work; but Maurice felt there was a tacit understanding between masters and Rogers that if anyone attempted to lay hands on him there would be a row. The fact that Rogers' mother was English had had a beneficent influence on him; it seemed that he retained the best characteristics of both races and the deep modesty of a true man. Rogers did his best to encourage Maurice to work; but the young Frenchman's complete inability to concentrate on anything that did not interest him at the outset was very discouraging. He decided that Maurice's imagination was too lively and too evanescent to cope with the regularity and the conforming to type that existed at Manford.

The only other friend Maurice had was Blair. The latter's people were in India; Blair was left to spend his childhood at school, with the holidays at the houses of friends or relatives. He was a mature boy for his age, possessed, however, of a child-like delight in fiction. He would tell the wildest stories about anybody or anything in the world, unless it was a question of discipline or honor, in which case he was honest as the day.

IV

MAURICE one day denied having laughed in class.

The master, Mr. Bedloe, looked at him and went on with his work. Suddenly Maurice felt immensely ashamed, and so, class finished, he walked to Mr. Bedloe's desk.

"I'm sorry I lied, sir!"

The master excused him and told him to run off to play football during the break between classes.

Maurice did not know why he was sorry: truth to say, he was not a bit sorry, but merely ashamed. These people could not understand him and were ever punishing him for reasons he could not guess; if he could evade punishment when he really deserved it, he would be squaring accounts. His shame was due to the fact that he had seen Blair glaring at him. He understood that, living in such a community, he was bound to observe external usages, though he had to suffer for it. He walked to the changing-room to put on his boots; Blair was awaiting him there.

"Hello!" he said to Blair jauntily, trying to feel there was nothing between them.

"You dirty sneak!" Blair called, "Filthy little liar!"

Maurice bowed his head.

"Take this, you stinker!"

Blair's fist hit him between the eyes. Stars! Lightning, let loose through his brain! He reeled and put up his hands, as though to avoid falling on top of Blair. The other thought he was making for him and hit him again, on the nose this time. Maurice dropped to the ground and lay there, motionless. He realized that a flow of hot blood was passing across his face. He wanted to avoid its getting on his collar: it would be a nuisance to run up to the linen-room and explain without sneaking on Blair. Maurice sat up.

"Sorry, young Frère!" Blair told him, "I didn't mean to lam you so hard!"

No answer.

"Do you want to fight me?" asked the boy.

Maurice was silent. He knew he could fight Blair and have an even chance of coming out victor; he could surely not receive worse punishment than he had already; vengeance, too, rose in his breast. But above these sentiments there was reason. Dimly,

somehow, he saw that he had been guilty of an offense against a code that, though false, perhaps, still obtained; and as long as he was at Manford it was a thing he must obey. Later . . . well, that was a different question.

"I'll fight you some other day!" he assured Blair, "but not now! Don't think I'm afraid of you: you know I'm not funky of anybody! If I'm not knocking your dirty jaw in now, it's because I don't want to."

The other was stupidly surprised.

"I suppose you were right," continued Maurice, "according to your idea. It's not mine, but everybody's at Manford. So it's not worth finding fault with, much less fighting about. It may interest you to hear that I stayed back from class and owned up to old Bedloe."

Things after that incident went more smoothly for Maurice. Rogers found in Blair a new ally when it came to defending Maurice from a lot of unjust bullying. Maurice sank back into the even tenor of his mental, the uneven tenor of his practical existence. He would act up to Manford ideals if there were any chance of being detected in betraying them; otherwise he would do as he wished.

He took to learning enough of his lessons to be thought progressing. That, heaven knows, did not need to be much, so at the minimum of trouble he purchased immunity. Latin he learned by heart. That Balbus built a wall or that Caius loved Julia was to him supremely dull and divinely absurd. Whether Labienus, with all his forces behind him, managed to beat a handful of painted savages or not, was inconsequential. What interested Maurice a little in the question was how much of Labienus and how much of the painted savage had gone to make up the ideals of Manford.

Outside of Latin, he enjoyed only French and history: other subjects were a bore or a tribulation. Mr. Dawson-Meers corrected him when he pronounced Poitiers any way but "Poy-teers." He was, remarked that gentleman, in an English school, learning English geography out of an English

book. What the natives of "Poy-teers" called their town was beside the point. This was a lesson of geography and not philology. Did young Frère know what philology was? No? Well, the next time Mr. Dawson-Meers caught him looking out of the window or copying Rogers' map he would make him write out the definition of philology a hundred times.

In his French classes, Maurice was called upon as arbiter on the simplest of questions.

"You're French!" Mr. Bedloe would say, "so you must know how to pronounce this word!"

It was immensely flattering and Maurice was humble and grateful. But it was history that interested Maurice most. Why and how could Henry the Eighth have seven legal wives and kill some of them? Why could his father not have several wives? Two, let us say, taking account of the right ratio between a King of England and a Senator of France. The history-book abounded in personal details. It was so much more vital to Maurice that Admiral Byng should have been shot on the quarter-deck of his own ship than to know just when he suffered that ignominy.

All the battles the English won, from the beginning of history to the end, in this book for the inculcation of the grandeur of the British Empire in the minds of its young men, amused Maurice. Never had France won so much as a battle; it was wonderful to think how after having been beaten by the British day in and day out for seven hundred years, the French still existed. Maurice was far too wise, however, to betray his feelings. He learned the book as it ran. If he was forced to insist, in strict honesty to his convictions, that France had won one or two little skirmishes, he wrote in his paper that he had read an account of the battle in a French book, and, to save endless argument, that weather conditions as well as force of numbers had helped his countrymen.

So conditions were, on the whole, not

too unpleasant. If Maurice bridled his vivacity, studiously sought not to give offense to the most hide-bound and attempted to show himself trying at least externally to be typical of Manford, England and His Majesty the King, there never was anything to complain of very bitterly. But there were times when sheer animal spirits and youthful verve broke bounds; or when a sense of humor could not be held in leash; or when the most confirmed hypocrite or actor had to show what a fiction even the recreating of an unnatural existence could be. Then young Frère got it, and got it hot! Even Rogers or Blair refused to step in on his behalf. Well-meaning as they were, they felt that even if Maurice was being banged about for something he had not consciously done on purpose, it was good for him to learn. The next time he would know better.

V

THE Christmas holidays came and passed. After a month in Paris (most of which was spent in children's parties in overheated and garish houses where all the youngsters looked fragile and hypersensitive and the parents fat and sleek), the boys returned to Manford together. Frère I.—he had long ago dropped the grave accent from his name and anglicized its pronunciation—was very pleased at the prospect of moving up a class; Frère II.—who had invariably made it his business to add the accent if it were left off on any list and who rigorously insisted upon an effort to have the French sound reproduced—was to be still in the Bottom Form, though a new boy called Brian Henderson became number forty-eight and Frère II. number forty-seven.

It was perhaps unfortunate that Maurice returned to Manford with the confidence of his previous experience. Nothing worse than had befallen him could possibly be his lot in the future, short of expulsion. He knew, too, that there were very few things for which one would be expelled, and it never oc-

curred to him to take pleasure in doing those things. So, on the whole, he was pretty safe.

A period of the most unholy ragging began for him. Rogers had left school to return to Philadelphia and prepare to enter Groton, in America; Blair had drawn away from Maurice because his cousin had come to Manford and he was naturally thrown into closest contact with the other Blair. Maurice did not regret his friend's defection, realizing that it was unintended, natural and never spoken of by either of the boys. He was compensated in the friendship of Brian Henderson.

The new boy served no apprenticeship whatsoever: from almost the first day, he arrived! Outwardly, so far as his fellow-schoolmates were concerned, he could not give any annoyance; indeed, his pleasant personality attracted them. Inwardly, aside from the conformance ordained by his birth, nationality and environment, he was one of the most boldly original creatures Maurice had ever encountered. His one aim in life was to have a good time, which meant to laugh and to be happy at the expense of other people. Other people did not, fortunately for Maurice, mean his fellows, but the masters, or anybody so unfortunate as to be placed in a position of authority over him.

One might have thought that the Staff of Manford College was engaged in a gigantic plot to deprive Brian Henderson of his life; short of that, certainly there was the traditional enemy against whom no Hector of the beamy helm ever performed with such valor and persistence. Life was just one rag. If he could make his friends laugh in class by any ruse or trick within the compass of his imagination, behold! they laughed. And he sat up in bed long after lights out, indeed long after the Monitors had gone to bed, to plan with Maurice what fate the morrow should have in store for Mr. Bedloe or Mr. Gregg.

With the headmaster, Brian assumed an angelic countenance. The boy looked as if butter would not melt in his mouth, a cherub, a Murillo *gamin*.

And Mr. Dawson-Meers could not understand why Bedloe and Gregg seemed to be having such a hard time with a perfectly decent youngster. It is to be supposed that Colonel Henderson knew his progeny far better than anyone else, for he wrote to Mr. Dawson-Meers that the boy loved fun, but there was nothing like a sound thrashing now and again to make him toe the mark.

The lad's imagination was fertile and inexhaustible. From the merest little skirmishes to the most brilliantly conceived and executed raids and battles, Henderson's indefatigable campaign continued. Strange, too, he never seemed to get into trouble. Not that he lied, but that he covered up his traces with infinite care. It was only after the Burning of the Rags (of which he spoke as though it were the Battle of the Boyne or The Fall of Quebec) that he was punished, because the headmaster called on the perpetrators to own up or the entire school would be kept in till the crime was tracked to its source.

Brian and Maurice had been reading about the Gunpowder Plot. To them it became the most thrilling exploit in the world. In vain Maurice tried to match it for Brian with the story of the St. Barthélémy or the French Revolution. No, there never was anyone quite like Guy Fawkes. From that decision to creating the event in miniature the step was not long. Mr. Fawkes and his French co-plotter, le duc de Frère, displayed all their ingeniousness to achieve the most theatrical effect possible. Manford men would tell each other the tale in years to come, when Brian was Lord High Admiral of the Fleet and Maurice was married—the latter's ambition at that particular time soared no higher than bigamy, a wife for every other day in the week.

For a while, plans of attack were suggested, weighed and adopted or rejected so stealthily that not even the boys in their dormitory were aware of what was brewing. In the cellar, directly over which was the Bottom Form, there were five boilers. Moreover, be-

tween the cellar and the classroom was a ventilator, under the desk occupied by Maurice and Brian. They were familiar with its workings: in the cold weather they had opened it to admit a hurricane and then, with much show, blow on their hands to annoy Bedloe. With one foot, either of them could manipulate it at will. So it was always fun to push it open or close it suddenly, especially if Bedloe had laid some papers on the side of a desk.

Dick, the janitor, was forever rummaging about the cellar; Maurice and Brian were tireless in watching him. Occasionally a spitting-competition was organized; and though both Brian and Maurice vowed a bull's-eye had been scored, it seems neither ever succeeded in hitting the shining target of Dick's head. The dampness of the walls, too, was an alibi, so far as Dick was concerned. Maurice, naturally, got caught trying to spit and was very properly reprimanded by old Bedloe for being a filthy, driveling little swinehound, nor did Brian's assurance that "Young Frère has catarrh, because he always slobbers, Mr. Bedloe, sir!" do much good.

VI

THE plot was well organized. Maurice and Brian (the latter attending to the execution of their design, the former keeping *Cave*) stole down to the cellar on the eve of the great day. Brian piled up some old rags, which, by way of encouragement, he soaked in kerosene. Between door and cellar they drew some tubs full of water, and they made sure of the hose that always lay there. They then poured sufficient water over the rags to cause a thick, rich smoke rather than a dangerous conflagration. It was decided, not without weighty consultations, that Mr. Gregg should be the victim. Old Bedloe had had a rather hard time of it lately, they thought, and it was a generous gesture to let him off this time. Gregg, moreover, looked like that pig, King James: Brian vouched for it. So they

would have to wait till second class, Greek, at nine-thirty.

Mr. Gregg was busily explaining wherein the Aorist differed from the Perfect to a class whose proverbial somnolence was not absent that day. Maurice winked at Brian, Brian winked back. A foot moved over the ventilator, discovering, tied from the rag-heap to the ventilator itself, a string with paper streamers on it, something like a kite's string. Brian gazed at Gregg. The latter's back was turned as he wrote on the board illustrations of the intricate personalities of the Perfect with or without "have"! Brian smiled and piled up two dictionaries, two grammars and a pencil-box before him. Behind the battlement they afforded, he crouched low: a match was lighted noiselessly, and equally noiselessly a foot was applied to the ventilator, when it was made sure that the train would work.

A few moments went by, during which they both purged their souls by attending to the Aorist's vicissitudes. A genial draft, however, was created by little sudden openings and shuttings: it would never do for the string to be a dud. In three minutes, it was agreed that the time would be ripe for the *coup*. The duc de Frère rose to elucidate.

"Please, Mr. Gregg, sir, I seem to notice a very curious and foul stench in this room, sir!"

Everybody in the class turned. Whispering, a titter, laughter.

Gregg forsook the Aorist and from his tone the separation, even though temporary, was painful.

"What's that!" he barked. "Are you trying to be funny?"

Maurice paraphrased suavely and with immense gravity.

"I said, sir, that my nostrils detected an evil odor—in fact, a very foul smell—in this classroom, sir."

The smoke must not come too fast. An element of doubt must enter into even the greatest art. If Gregg thought he was playing the fool and punished him, Brian's foot would perform his

vindication and that would be a good one on Gregg.

The latter sniffed the air meditatively.

"Perhaps, sir . . .?" suggested Brian with evident reluctance.

"Well?" urged Gregg.

Brian spoke timidly, yet with a note of willing helpfulness.

"Perhaps, sir, the smell comes from young Brownlee. I know he is a very dirty fellow and does not wash often. . . ."

Gregg scowled: "You may keep your observations to yourself!"

Brownlee turned round to face Brian and whisked ink on him with his pen. He spoke, threatening dire reprisal when he got young Henderson after class. Henderson's head and a jelly would be similar in aspect, according to Brownlee.

The foot moved again, slowly and with definite finality. Clouds of smoke poured in. Brian and Maurice jumped up.

"Fire! Fire! There's a fire in the cellar!"

As they rose they did not neglect to push their books over, nor did Brian's hand miss seizing Brownlee's ear. General pandemonium was about to break loose, chaos fluttered on the verge of the Bottom Form, but was avoided. Or rather, postponed. Mr. Gregg ordered Henderson and Frère to run down and find out what was the matter. Their answer, howled up the ventilator, came muffled but not too indistinct from the cellar. Its purport was that they were engaged in a bitterly uneven battle against fire, that help should be sent down immediately, that they had used all the water in the place, but results could not be foretold, that Brownlee was a snot and a coward for not coming to their aid.

The whole of the Bottom Form, Mr. Gregg at its head, rushed to the cellar. The fire was out, though the smoke continued feebly. But water from each of the five boilers, from the tubs, and from the hose was beginning an inundation. In the midst of the water, which in some places was two feet deep,

stood Maurice and Brian, seemingly busy, actually cavorting in the puddles.

"We stopped the fire, sir, but the water got away from us!" they informed him. "It was a terrible fire, sir!"

He was silent a moment; then urged them to come out.

"But we've got to stop this water, sir!"

"Come and give us a hand, you lazy rotters!" cried Brian.

The lazy rotters did to a man. All of them set to and got wet. Sworn enemies wishing to wipe out ancient scores splashed or ducked their opponents. Some of the boys took shoes and socks off and waded. The more imaginative organized a regatta.

"Damn you, sir! You're taking up the whole river!"

"Don't you know the rules of the race!"

At last, forty minutes later, Dawson-Meers had them all out of it. Lines were given as punishment to those who would not obey him and come out of the mess immediately. One boy was caned for pretending to be drowned: he did not know Dawson-Meers was watching. They adjourned to change. It was lunch-time. They had enjoyed the most joyous rag in the history of Manford and they had beaten the headmaster out of the last three morning classes of that memorable day. Satisfaction was their portion; Brian's and Maurice's, bliss.

But retribution followed.

VII

MATCHES were discovered on the floor of the classroom. Brian had dropped the box and it had been picked up. Mr. Gregg announced that they were not his; none of the boys were allowed to be in possession of matches. This was the beginning of a suspicion of arson. More light was shed shortly afterward by Dick. Consideration of the events following the discovery of the fire disclosed that tubs had been wheeled up: Maurice and Brian naturally explained that they had done so as

a fire-extinguishing measure. But the worst was when it appeared that the water had not risen high enough to cover up the traces of a heap of rags soaked in kerosene.

Mr. Dawson-Meers then decided it was the work either of mischief or mania. It was pleasanter to believe his school harbored a fool and not a pyromaniac. He called the school together one evening after tea.

"Boys," he said, "we have come to the decision that the fire of the other day was due either to the carelessness of someone who has been afraid to own up or to the mischief of one of you who realizes how wrong he is. I am going to ask the guilty one to come and tell me about it all. I shall punish him myself as I judge best. But if my appeal has no effect, you may rest assured if the culprit is subsequently discovered, it will go hard with him. In the meantime, until we get to the bottom of this, all half-holidays and going out on Sunday with your people are at an end; any cricket matches with other schools will be scratched. School, dismissed!"

"Well, it's all up!" Brian told Maurice.

"Yes, we're goners!" lamented his friend.

"I don't see why. . . . All this business with the school!"

"But oh! God!" exclaimed Maurice, "wasn't it a wonderful rag!"

VIII

It had been just exactly that. But though in retrospect it offered delight, the prospect of facing Dawson-Meers, whose inability to understand would give place to savagery, darkened Maurice's imagination. That he was not alone in trouble was but meagre consolation. Without favoritism, the headmaster would be more lenient in Brian's case, because he could fathom Brian's motives; Maurice apprehended complete incredulity on his score. To Dawson-Meers, it would be analogous to the case of a son of the house making an ass of himself in Brian, whereas Maurice

was more in the position of a stranger, a guest, who had been made welcome and therefore had no right to take the same liberty as Brian.

They rapped timorously at the study-door. A moment later, the voice of Dawson-Meers was bidding them enter.

The great man sat on a couch, his feet up before him. He was smoking a cigarette and reading. He nodded.

"Well, boys!"

"We've come to own up about the fire, sir!" Brian told him.

The effect was barely perceptible. Its sole manifestation lay in the almost exaggerated calm their confession induced.

"I see," said Mr. Dawson-Meers, as though he had known all along who the culprits were.

A silence. Maurice felt he was sweating a little. His eyes followed the design of the wall-paper and in spite of his other thoughts, that of the banality of the tracery fastened itself on his brain. Why didn't the great man speak? Why were they being so closely scrutinized? It was better than a huge, sudden, violent rage, and yet Maurice had preferred to have been caned immediately.

At last the voice took Maurice's eyes off the wall-paper.

"Which of you is responsible for the idea?"

"I am, sir!" said Maurice, because, in spite of everything, he could not keep away a certain pride in the monstrous ingenious tactics they had adopted.

"I am!" Brian was saying. Maurice knew Brian shouldered the blame from the chivalry of schoolboy codes.

Mr. Dawson-Meers considered.

"You first, Henderson!"

Maurice did not seem to hear.

"Frère, you may wait outside while I deal with Henderson!"

Maurice tiptoed out after a glance at Brian, a glance that said, "Lucky devil! You get out of it first! I have all the anticipation, and a more or less practical demonstration with you as victim, and then I get mine!"

He waited just outside the door, sitting on a high-backed bench. He could

overheard the general tone of the voices coming through the door, but the words were virtually inaudible. In sound, the conversation seemed like a practical business-dealing; nor was Maurice very surprised when he heard Dawson-Meers rise and rummage in a cupboard next to the wall. Maurice knew the head-master to be just a few inches from him on the other side of the wall; he realized the great man was looking for a cane. Was it to be the Gunner's Daughter, a thick sergeant-major's stick, that did not hurt very much? Was it to be the swishy, bending officer's swagger-stick? Was it to be the birch?

"Bend over, Henderson!" came the command.

Maurice felt sick, faint, dizzy. His knees bent, his throat contracted, something seemed to swim in his head, and, now and again, crash against it, like a great hulk, born by the wash of the waters, crashing against a stone sea-wall. It was exactly as he had felt at the dentist's, when the latter fumbled about inside the cavity of a tooth, edging nearer and yet nearer to a raw nerve, probing and desperately certain to touch it in one second, in two.

Maurice counted the strokes. One, two, three: so far it was not being such a hard licking. Four, five: Dawson-Meers was getting into form, his eye was in! Six: the hardest of all, and not a sound from Brian. The boy was a sportsman, he was not blubbing. Seven. Sharp, clean, hard thwacks they were. There was a rite, almost, in their administration. A pause, while the cane was poised just above the great man's elbow; a turn of the wrist; then, the reverberation that Maurice could feel in his bowels as he listened. A clean reverberation, like a muffled pistol-crack, as the stick met its target of flesh, tightly encased in the boy's trousers as he bent over. That was all: Maurice's turn soon. A few words of advice, doubtless, thought Maurice. Something like this:

"You must curb your imagination and not let it lead you astray. And you must not let a stronger imagination than

yours push you on. You are not a bad boy. Behave better in future. Go, boy!"

Simple in literal statement, yes. But it meant that Dawson-Meers did not appreciate Brian's rich fancy, because—well, British gentlemen did not think so very deeply, it was part of their code to leave that sort of thing to professional thinkers. The real mind, too original to be hearty and amateur, must be foreign.

"Go, boy, and send young Frère in!"

The door opened and through it passed a Brian very bright of eye. Tears, as a matter of fact, that Brian had refused to shed, though doing so might have saved him one or two strokes. He was smiling, the little devil, and looking as though the thing were a great lark. He winked at Maurice.

"Your turn! Good luck!"

Well, he might be happy since his punishment was over. Maurice would have liked to know whether, after he passed the corner and went to the lav., after he closed the door behind him and locked it, young Henderson would not take down his bags, look at the welts on his body and—perhaps—cry a bit.

He entered the room.

"Henderson told me the entire story!"

"Yes, sir!"

The thing to do was to get it done with. If there were any discussion, Maurice was bound, sooner or later, unconsciously to offend him.

"You were both equally guilty!"

"Yes, sir!"

"How many times have you been beaten this term, Frère?"

"Three or four times, sir," Maurice said, hardly realizing how he answered, "or perhaps five!"

"Hm! A beating does not seem to have much impression on you."

"No, sir. I mean, yes, sir!"

What was he saying? What was happening? Why did the great man glare at him so? Did he suspect him of lying? Of pulling his leg? If only they could get to business and then Mau-

rice could go and talk it over with Henderson.

"I have a very good mind to expel you, Frère!"

Maurice's heart sank. So Brian was to go scot-free (a beating was not such a calamity!) and Maurice was to be sent home in disgrace. Manfordians would always remember:

"Oh, yes: Frère! There were two, I think. One went to Oxford and was Captain of the Fencing Team. The other was sacked. No, I don't know why!"

God! they might think he had been sacked for. . . . People always remembered the inflicted penalty but rarely the cause.

"You see, I think you were more to blame in this than Henderson!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Were you?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Why did you do it?"

"I was a fool, sir!"

"Setting fire wilfully to people's property is criminal!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You're a criminal, Frère!"

"Yes, sir!"

He wished he could say something other than that insane "Yes, sir," but it seemed the mechanism of his mouth refused to make any other sound, save that in which it was set. "Yes, sir!" "Yes, sir!" He was a parrot, a driveling fool. But a criminal? He wanted to roar with laughter and say: "You silly idiot, do you think burning rags in a rotten cellar, when you have taken precautions against danger, is criminal? Do you think, as you stand there with me at your mercy, that beside mere principle, there exists such a thing as the spirit in which we act, or are you too great an ass to wish to realize it? Anyhow, it would be caddish to give me the sack; it would not be the sportsmanship you blab about so freely when you are not involved!"

The silence continued. Water came into Maurice's eyes, salt humidity, not of fear, pain, disappointment or disgrace, but of impotent rage. He blew

his nose, carefully and thoroughly.

"I don't think I shall expel you, Frère!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You said . . .?"

Maurice knew here was a lion crouching over a mouse and eager for tribute, not to its strength or power, but to its magnanimity.

"I said: Thank you, sir!"

"You had better thank your lucky stars the damage was no worse," went on Dawson-Meers, "and that Henderson was fool enough to let himself in for this too!"

The last remark, thought Maurice, escaped from the great man's lips; he was almost thinking aloud, as most people to whom thinking comes as an effort.

"I shall give you a hiding: one you will remember!"

He was less savage than Maurice had expected, less savage than foolish. To him, a good hiding meant that Maurice would forever walk in more righteous ways, because if he thought of mischief he would recall the last painful result of mischief. He did not know, this great man so much older and better than himself, that when one's mind flashed on something brilliantly, one simply did it, with never a thought, even, of consequence.

"If ever you do anything like it again, I shall expel you!"

"Yes, sir!"

"And you shall copy Virgil every half-holiday for the rest of the term, five hundred lines at a time, which you will bring me when you have done that many. And—" he paused. "Yes, you are to stay in during the twelve-o'clock break to copy the Bible. You better do the Acts of the Apostles, and bring me what you have done each week!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Understand? Virgil every half, and every day the Acts. Now, bend over!"

He went to the wall again. So Maurice was not to get the Daughter of the Gunner. Out of the corner of his eye, Dawson-Meers was looking at Maurice. He took out the birch. Moved back to the boy.

"Not padded?" he asked perfunctorily. (Sometimes the boys put a copy-book under the seat of their trousers, and legend had it that horsehair placed on the surface of the beaten portion had caused canes to snap in half, like matches.)

"No, sir!"

"Better take your bags down!"

Maurice slipped his trousers down, holding them in front of him, above the knee. He bent over. Mad thoughts of previous beatings whirled through his brain. He recalled school legends. How Dumbleton, who became a general in the Boer War and died at Magersfontein, had been caned by Dawson-Meers' father the last day he was in school, and how he had pretended at the first blow to be so grievously injured that he had scampered around the room screaming and rushed into the hall and through the building and on the playground, holding his bags up and vowing he was about to die. How Eldridge, who was now at Eton and had a younger brother still at Manford, had fainted after the seventh stroke of the birch administered by this Dawson-Meers. How Martin had been told that it was the cane had made the British Empire what it was: not, indeed, on the playing-grounds, but in the master's study of Eton had Waterloo been won.

Waterloo? Maurice Frère was getting his, now; this was his Waterloo. Two strokes, three, four. That meant two more; nobody but Eldridge had ever had more than six of the birch on the bare! Of the birch on the bare—that sounded very pretty: like a line in a love-song. Maurice instinctively, at the sixth, pressed his hands backward against his thigh. Pain, pain such as he had never known, racked his body. It had been growing, though he had not very accurately realized it, since the third blow. That was when he had thought:

"It hurts me, my dear boy, more than it does you!"—a foolish formula that masters were supposed to employ but never did. And then the ancient rhyme: "My son, my son, it must be done . . ."

with the dramatic antithesis of its last two lines.

Pain, pain incredible. What was Dawson-Meers waiting for? Did he expect him to blub? Well, he would see Dawson-Meers, Manford and the rest of the world damned first. Let Dawson-Meers hurry and finish him up. What was he waiting for? What was he waiting for?

"That's all. Cut along now. And behave yourself in future!"

But it was not all, Maurice reflected, as he pulled his trousers up. It wasn't all! There was something hot trickling down over him. What could it be? O God, what humiliation! Was it possible that . . . Oh, no! No, no, no, no, no! And yet, pain—one didn't know. . . . Furtively as he adjusted his clothing, he looked backward at himself. He was bleeding: the knots in the birch must have torn his flesh. He was glad he had not noticed that while he was being beaten: he might have fainted or made an ass of himself! As it was, he was just . . . bleeding! Thank God!

But it was not all. Every break at twelve o'clock he was going to have to copy out the Acts of the Apostles until the end of the term. Who the devil were the apostles and what the devil did they mean by making acts? And such long acts!

It was not all. Every Wednesday and Saturday he was going to be kept in copying words and words and words that he did not understand about a fool called Æneas—soppy name!—and by a chap called Virgil. No, it most certainly was not all. The bitterness of the prospect, the ache of the immediate past created within him a cold heat: a fury seized him, but it was one of ice. He would not be violent; he was passive, calm, but keen and sharp as a razor-blade. Passionless anger can be very consuming.

He turned, all his contempt in his voice.

"Thank you, sir!"

Dawson-Meers looked up, uncomprehending.

"Oh, that's all right. I don't like to expel a boy if I can help it!"

Maurice threw open the door, closed it with great solicitude, and burst into tears.

IX

TIME mitigated the sense of injustice in Maurice. After he and Brian had compared notes on their exploits and penalties, after they had narrated events to their fellows with embellishments of their own fancy, things went better. Brian was sympathetic when he heard how much harder the great man had been on Maurice and vowed he would help his friend in the writing of the lines. Their script was not so very different: Brian would start much further on in the book and it would be easy.

Maurice, moreover, enjoyed being the topic of school discussion. Again and again he was made to tell of the birching, of how he had not felt it till he grew faint; of how the great man had assured him he had not meant to lam him so hard; of how he had forgiven the headmaster. In the swimming-pool, the marks of the birch on his back created much admiration, especially when they became blue and later ochre.

The twelve o'clock breaks, however, and the half-holidays were very mournful. For the first week or so he was hoping the headmaster might realize that too much was being demanded of him; but nothing happened from official quarters, and the Acts of the Apostles were succeeded by the Book of Revelation, while Æneas continued his uncomprehended voyages under the additional burden of Maurice's curses. Three weeks passed. Maurice had now reached the part where Brian had begun to copy, so one Saturday he brought the five hundred lines Brian had done to Dawson-Meers. How the latter knew, Maurice never discovered. Or possibly he did not know, but was disgusted at the untidiness of the work. At any rate, he tore the paper up and told Maurice to do those five hundred lines again.

It was a great blow. By omitting one in ten lines, Maurice had already quite an advantage on the great man; moreover, he devoted much time during Prep. and even during class to continuing the work, hoping that if he finished three books or so he might be let off the rest. Brian was disconsolate. Perhaps it was this feeling that caused him to be caught in the perpetration of some outrage in class. He was, in any case, ordered to join Maurice, but on half-holidays only, for the remainder of the term. His portion was copying out Latin gender rhymes over and over again. On the whole, though, that was gayer than Maurice's task, because Brian had a happy faculty of coining their dross into gold. On hot May afternoons, while the sun shone across the sill into the Bottom Form, while the song of the swallow mingled with the drone of a bee and the sharp knock of cricket bats against balls was borne on the serene air, Brian would chant:

Abstract nouns in -io call
Feminina one and all,
Masculine will only be
Things that you may touch or see,
Such as pugio, vespertillio,
Scipio and—by my old Billy-O
Gregg and Bedloe drive me silly-O!

or else:

Common are sacerdos, dux,
Vates, parens et conjux,
Sailor, soldier, tailor, tinker,
Bedloe is a dirty stinker!

Or what greater joy than to write in capital letters across the blackboard:

THE SILLIEST ASS IN ALL ENGLAND
IS ROLAND DAWSON-MEERS, CLOSE-
LY PRESSED BY MESSRS. GREGG
AND BEDLOE, BRACKETED SECOND.
SIGNED: BRIAN HENDERSON, ESQ.
MAURICE FRÈRE, ESQ.

But, though humor came to mellow the rigors of their lot, it soon became evident to Maurice and Brian that there must be an end to even the most stoic patience. The world, after all, lay no further than over the wall, and the wall was reached by merely climbing out of

the window, crossing the coal-yard and going the length of the rifle-range.

The vague idea had occurred to them one day as they sat staring out of the window and wishing they were out on the field watching the Manford vs. St. George's School cricket match. The following Saturday Manford was playing Marlborough House away from home, so the idea still hovered as an unfeasible dream. But the next week Manford played its last match of the season against Allington, and when Maurice and Brian discovered that neither of them was to be let off to watch it, their indignation knew no bounds.

It was a part of sacred tradition that the last Saturday of the term, which came just before examination-time and which ushered in the match of the year, brought with it a reprieve to even the most hardened sinners with no conditions of penitence imposed. At first they thought they were being merely tested and sooner or later some boy would rush in: "Frère and Henderson, you're to come out to the match. You've been let off your work by Bedloe."

Yet Hermes came not.

Then they thought they had been forgotten, so if they made a great deal of noise Dawson-Meers, on his way to the fields, might hear them as he crossed the hall. He did and adjured the cessation of their untimely tumult. All hope evaporated. Finally they made up their minds. They would climb the wall and go to town. They might go either to the aquarium or to the County Cricket Grounds; they had four bob between them and that amply sufficed for ginger beer at a penny a glass and hoky-poky at three-pence. Even were they caught, nothing but a caning would result: School was breaking up in less than a week, so they could not be expelled, no more work could possibly be imposed upon them, especially as Exam-time began next Monday, and if they were given work during the vacation it would be easy to produce a doctor's certificate to attest their illness. Brian had doubts, for Colonel Henderson was

—well, Colonel Henderson; Maurice, in his generosity, promised to procure one for him. All he would have to do was to fill in his name in the blank space. *Vorwärts!*

X

OVER the window-ledge they scampered and through the coal-yard. At the end of the range, Maurice stood sentinel, keeping *Cave* while Brian legged the wall. Then he followed him over. They gazed at the sky and down the road and back at the outline of the school: they were free at last for an hour or two hours at most, but none the less free!

It was decided to go to the County Cricket Grounds. The boys walked down the drive, along the wall enclosing the Manford School playing-field. They heard the snap of bails and a sound of applause as the wicket fell.

"Give us a leg up, young Frère," said Brian. "We ought at least have a squint at the match!"

Maurice did as he was asked. Manford, it seemed, had made 63 runs with 4 wickets down and Dunne, the captain, was on his way to bat. Things were not so bad. Blithely they walked on, stopping for an ice or some chocolate-creams. Maurice bought a *Pink 'Un* and read choice bits of it to Brian. Some day, Maurice hoped, he would have the urbanity of its writer, he would be able to speak carelessly of great and famous people who were his friends. He began by telling Brian of an imaginary Hindu Rajah he had known.

The afternoon passed by pleasantly. By now Maurice had only a shilling left; Brian was penniless. Eating their chocolates, they had taunted an enthusiast by telling him Sussex could not play for nuts, that it ought to be a second-class county, that it had not played real cricket in the last ten years. An old woman, who asked for information as to certain rules of the game, was properly stuffed, to their huge amusement. A man who was "run out," they told her, was a bad man who was ar-

rested. The men in white coats were "empires," so called because they represented the British Empire; they were policemen in disguise; it was their business to arrest bad players and violent men: that was why they were constantly signaling with their hands. The tea-interval was called; the boys annexed two buns and glasses of lemonade. It grew late: stumps were drawn.

"Great Scott!" called Brian. "We've got to do a bunk now if we don't want to get caught!"

"Oh, we've been caught already!" said Maurice, pessimistic. "I don't care a damn!"

"Nor do I, but I'd rather not get nabbed!"

"Well, if we are, we are. Anyhow, we've had a good day!"

"Yes," agreed Brian rather breathlessly.

They turned their steps toward Hove. To go home was a little melancholy, especially if one did not know one's fate. If one had not got into trouble, it would be fun telling the dormitory about it after Lights Out! And . . . oh! they had a little money left.

"Do you smoke, young Henderson?" asked Maurice.

"N-n—yes. Sometimes. Do you?"

"Yes, I'm fond of a smoke now and again. How about some cigs?"

"All right!"

"I only smoke a cigar after a heavy meal," vouchsafed Maurice.

They stopped at a tobacconist's and Maurice explained how his father sent him for a package of Wild Woodbines. Strange to relate, they were given the cigarettes. Climbing the hill, they smoked, telling each other old stories of seasoned smokers: how Colonel Henderson had a dozen pipes, how Senator Frère had caught Maurice's young aunt and henceforward allowed her cigarettes.

Suddenly Brian stopped dead.

"For God's sake, look!"

Maurice followed Brian's glance. At the top of the hill were the Allington team and the Manford team accompanying them to the station under the guid-

ance of Mr. Gregg and Mr. Bedloe. Unless the boys acted quickly they would be caught.

"You go here," ordered Brian, pointing to the left. "I'll go to the right! We'll meet at the top of the hill!"

Hastily they crammed their caps, with their telltale school-colors, deep in their pockets.

"If we miss each other," Brian added, "wait for me outside the Range. I swear I sha'n't go in without you!"

"Right!"

They separated. Maurice ran his way to the first intersecting alley and watched around the corner. He presently heard footsteps in the distance, then voices. The cricketers passed by. Behind them were Gregg and Bedloe. Maurice heard the former call to Bedloe; what he said he did not make out. But Gregg dodged down the road on the right, as though in pursuit of Brian. Maurice wished the road did not bend so as to prevent him, from where he was, from seeing whether there were any intersecting streets on Brian's side. What if Brian were caught? What if Bedloe and Gregg had been both sent with the players so one might catch the boys whose flight had been discovered. That would be really too awful.

Maurice continued his way, reaching the top of the hill circuitously. There was no sign of Brian. He began to feel nervous. The boys would be returning fairly soon: what was Maurice to do? Should he follow the road Gregg had taken? Or return to school? Or wait?

First, he went to the school and waited ten minutes behind a bush near an unused entrance to Manford. Minute after minute passed, each longer than the last. The boys returned from the station joking and chatting, pleased that they had won, happy that the end of the term was just next Friday. No sign of Gregg or of Brian. Maurice retraced his footsteps to the top of the hill, then went down the road Brian had taken. He must have missed him, somehow, but how? And Brian could not have got back to school because he would have waited by the rifle range.

Maurice reasoned as best he could, but it was no use. Suddenly he noticed it was eight o'clock.

Well, he was caught, there was no doubt of that. Tea and prayers must have revealed his absence. He might as well really make a day of it. He could perhaps crawl back at ten and invent some excuse. Fallen asleep in the bushes—no! Fainted—that was pretty tall! If Brian had not got in, he would wait for him till at least nine.

Maurice made his way to the Front. He wanted above all to see the water, the people walking up and down the Parade. He was immensely sick for shops and motor-cars and people, for movement and color and beauty.

XI

ON the sands there were only a few people left. Trippers from London, most of them: clerks and shop-people on a week-end. The more prudent among them had returned in order to be in time for their lodging-house high-teas. Maurice moved down the Parade toward the Metropole and the Grand. These people here on the sands were not having any fun: they were just exchanging the drabness of London for the drabness of the seaside. Besides they strewed the beach with the litter of their newspapers and brown paper-parcels; they took all the beauty out of it. The minstrels, there, with their faces painted black, were more amusing. They would come out again later, perhaps. The big one with a guitar looked particularly pleasant. Maurice chatted with him a few moments and discovered that though the worthy missed his wife, who was at Sydenham, he thought the Brighton girls were peaches and cream, and 'ot stuff for sure! It was his haste to meet some especially representative specimen of the category that tore the man away from Maurice in spite of his delight in so willing a listener.

Maurice stood in front of the Metropole. It was alive with people—gay, attractive men and women from his own

world, stepping in and out of cars, loitering on the front-steps, smoking and chatting. An inspiration came to Maurice. What a lark to go into the hotel and write a letter to Brian on Metropole paper! It would be such conclusive proof of his adventure and he knew Brian had begun to suspect some of his fine stories. He had just a penny left for the stamp. Cheers!

He followed the plan out. He thought he wrote rather well that day. He wondered what would be said if he brought back a goose-quill pen to school for exams. That would not be bad: they squeaked when one wrote fast. And they did improve the general decorative values of one's handwriting. He put one of the quills in his breast-pocket.

It was time to be returning soon. His gaze roamed about the room and he perceived at an adjoining desk a lady looking at him fixedly. He felt embarrassed. Did she know him for a Manfordian? She might easily have noticed him, if she were a Mother and had been to Evening Service Sunday, because he led the choir when there was a procession. But no! he seemed to know her! Who, who on earth could she be? A friend of his father's? No—Senator Frère never brought any such lady-friends to Grenoble. Perhaps he was imagining. . . .

She finished her letter and came to him.

"Pardon," she said, "but I think I know you. . . ."

The French accent brought it back immediately. The Grenoble train: that was it. Oh, what superb luck!

Was he staying here? No, he had just looked in. Did he come here often? He lied: occasionally. What a shame they had not met before! When did he have to return to school?

That question was a facer! When—

He repeated: "When?" with a puzzled look. Then suddenly, because he knew she would understand, he explained everything to her. He found himself repeating the wonderful exploits of the day; and she was listening,

drinking in the fun of it, smiling more brightly even than he remembered.

"It doesn't really matter when I get back," he concluded.

"Good!" she clapped her hands like a child, "*Tu resteras dîner avec moi, hein?*"

He beamed acceptance, gratitude, undying devotion.

"*Voyons, tu t'appelles Maurice, pas?*"

"*Mais oui, Madame!*"

The joy of hearing French again, of not being called "Morris" but "*Maurice*"; and the friendliness of her way of speaking!

"*Bien, mon petit. Mon, tu sais, je m'appelle Hélène. Tu comprends? On est deux gosses, va! On ira dîner avec mon papa!*"

XII

HÉLÈNE's apartment was on the third floor: it consisted of rooms on the corner with a fine view from the *salon*. As soon as she introduced Maurice, he ran to the window to watch the darkness floating vaporously over the sea-rim.

"*Oh! que c'est joli!*"

Hélène went into her bedroom and Maurice listened for voices, but heard Hélène sigh and then caught a sound of water splashing. She must be washing. Where was her father, Maurice asked himself, and what was he like? He must be a tall, fine-looking man, with something soldierly in his carriage and a gruff, friendly way about him. He could not but be charming, though Maurice thought Hélène had more of her mother in her.

How old was Hélène? Older, doubtless, than Odette Guyon in Grenoble, and Odette was nineteen. Older and ever so much nicer—softer, sort of. And she was younger than Nurse Villard at Manford. Maurice judged she must be twenty-six: that made her twice and a half his age. That was too much: Maurice did not wish her to be senior to that extent; he wished her to be just about ten years older than he was so that he was so that they might play about together on equal terms, and he

vowed he would never ask her age, lest the knowledge of it spell disillusion.

Suddenly he heard a particularly loud splash from the direction of Hélène's room, shortly followed by a bang, as of some heavy body landing on the floor, and then stamping.

"*C'est monsieur votre père?*" he asked.

The formal phraseology, Maurice's naïve seriousness, the comedy of the situation brought a roar of laughter to Hélène. Maurice was embarrassed; he had asked a perfectly sensible and polite question and the only answer he received was her unbridled mirth. Annoyance and *gêne* settled on him, so that when her amusement tinkled out in a few silver showers of mirth, she took him in her arms and kissed him. This almost consoled him, though he owned it to masculine pride to move away as though kissing and being kissed were slightly unmasculine.

"*Pauvre petit loup! Mais non, ce n'est pas mon père—mon brave père est mort depuis longtemps. I just said, 'papa' pour rigoler. C'est un très bon ami de ma famille qui vient de passer plusieurs jours à Brighton. He returns to London tonight in his automobile. Just now he is taking a bath before dinner!*"

Which did she speak more enchantingly: English or French? Both with equal animation and charm, or she would not dart from one to the other that way.

Maurice grasped the facts she gave him, but he was still unable to see in them a cause for hilarity. People did not go about calling friends of the family "*mon papa*," but even if they might be tempted to, there was nothing so confoundedly risible about it. And yet—how good-heartedly and thoroughly and joyously laughter came to Hélène! One could not hold her amusement against her because she was so charming in its expression. Maurice tightened his arms about her neck, pressed her face against his.

"Oh! I do like you! You're such a good pal!"

She melted to the compliment. For one moment, no doubt, that was the ultimate in praise. People could say one was beautiful, men did so constantly, even to ugly girls whom they desired and therefore perhaps forced themselves to see as beautiful. But the sincerity in the child, the modesty in affection, the effectiveness of under-statement! *Ravissant!*

She rose. It was time, she said, to order dinner because Donald would have to motor back to town and he must not start too late. It was moonlight, yes, but she hated to think of him driving at night; still, he absolutely had to, because he had a very early engagement tomorrow morning!

Donald! The friend was not French then, thought Maurice. And unaccountably he felt vexed that anybody sounding so essentially British both in his loud bathing and his name should make so free with Hélène as to take a bath in her place.

"I'll order dinner served here!" Hélène told him.

He nodded, sorry that they were not to dine downstairs. He would have enjoyed the orchestra, the people, the noise; he would have been proud to enter the dining-room at her side. But—

"What do you like to eat?"

Anything, he told her: it did not really matter.

She suggested: asparagus with mayonnaise, cold salmon and tartar sauce and a bottle of the Widow were the things she wanted. Perhaps for him—boys did like to eat so!—some cold ham and apple-sauce to follow. Then coffee and liqueurs—Triple-Sec? Chartreuse? Crème de menthe? She liked the last; Donald preferred cognac. Maurice agreed to anything, not knowing what a bottled widow had to do with a dinner, but remembering crème de menthe as the lovely green stuff people sucked through a straw out of an eye-washing-glass rather than a liquor glass filled with ice.

Hélène went back into her room,

knocking at the door and being told in a cheerful voice to crash right in! There was conversation; she was explaining something; the man laughed humorously and sympathetically; then silence. Probably a kiss! And then Hélène's cool, adorable voice:

"Three covers . . . yes, Number 341. And the maître-d'hôtel, please. There are some particular things I wish. . . ."

XIII

MAURICE would never forget that evening.

In later life he might go to banquets and speak to people who applauded him, like Senator Frère. But there would never be anything quite like this, even were he in the admirable Donald's place with some other boy who had run away from school for the lark of it, just as Maurice, now.

Hélène brought her friend to Maurice and presented them to each other, Maurice being adjured to call him Donald. In fact his last name was never mentioned. Donald was tall, strong and handsome; he bore the stamp of the sea and his eyes wore the look men have who are used to gazing into the endless distances of immense horizons.

"Mix the cocktails, dear," he said to Hélène, "and we'll make this dinner the best. I want to remember it!"

Hélène, according to Donald, had a talent—no, a genius—for blending to the precise, nice degree, the ingredients of a dry Martini. It was that in her that Donald would miss most, he said waggishly.

"The boy better not have one!" Hélène suggested.

Donald laughed:

"Why not, my dear? It won't do him any harm. He might just as well get used to it. I remember I had my first W. and S. when I was eight and I was quite tightish. No, you can't start too young!"

Maurice drained the glass to the dregs, in imitation of Donald. The cold bitter stuff burned his throat as it went

down, but when it reached his stomach, it sent through his body the most pleasurable exhilaration, like coming out of a cold bath on a hot day. It ran with his blood through his veins, so that his hands and feet became numb and then tingled. The taste was very horrid, to be sure; but the sensation was unique, splendid. Men had a marvelous time of it in life drinking this mixture that made one feel so well.

Maurice's tongue was loosed: he plied Donald with all manner of questions about the Navy. Had Donald gone through Osborne? What kind of a ship was he on? What did his rank correspond to in the Army? Was the Navy fun? How many uniforms did he have? Already, he was almost seeing himself in the uniform of a French admiral, directing the entrance of his fleet into the Kiel Canal while the band played the *Marseillaise* and millions shouted his name.

"Great Scott, boy, what a lot of questions!" Donald exclaimed.

Suddenly all the enthusiasm escaped from Maurice like air from a pricked balloon. What a fool he was! He always made it too much of a good thing: Britons could never understand that. But Donald noticed how crest-fallen the youngster seemed, and so he asked him about school. Maurice spoke volubly and delightedly, now, seeing his audience sympathetic and amused. He told them of Senator Frère and his life in Grenoble and Paris; the feud with Dawson-Meers was narrated in great detail and with plausible accuracy.

Beatings, down to the last recent birching, were minutely described; Brian was introduced to the company and his future as a general generously predicted; Rogers' reserve had become pusillanimity by now and Maurice said he was glad the American had left; Bedloe, Gregg, Vergil, Saint John, the Apostles, Nurse Villard and her rumblings, the Matron and her sneaking villainies, all passed before the tribunal of Maurice's fervor and all were meted out eloquently summary punishment.

Donald helped in this, describing

naval courts-martial and mentioning medieval sentences that were part of the history of the service. Bedloe was thrown in irons, Gregg was made to swab decks for the remainder of the voyage, Vergil was reduced to the rating of bottle-washer with dire threats if he was seen using a pen, Saint John was isolated where his propaganda would be of no avail, the Apostles fitted very nicely into the scheme of things as firemen and stokers, for there they would have a chance to taste at first hand the heat of hell-fire they had spoken of. Dawson-Meers was condemned to walk the plank, being the chief offender, but with a magnanimity confessedly due to the present feeling of calm and pleasure, he was let off by Maurice, though his ration of the cat-o'-nine tails was no less generous than the clemency of his judge.

Philippe passed into review. He was a good, sound fellow, Maurice declared, but he seemed to be lacking "*le feu sacré*." Just exactly what this sacred fire was, Maurice avowed he did not know; and he acknowledged his brother was cleverer in almost everything than himself; but he amended the statement by pointing out that if such was the case, on the other hand, in the things where Maurice excelled, he was comparatively superior.

"Philippe has no '*épanchement*'!" was Maurice's comment. He could be a Senator or a business man, but he would never be a writer or an actor or an explorer. Maurice would like to be the last and go to Africa or South America, or even the North Pole, though it was foolish to look for that; but even if he were not, there was so much to explore in life. That was it: an explorer in life. He would discover in people things they had never dreamed of possessing, and then they would either pay you or go and commit suicide.

Dinner arrived. Maurice's flow of eloquence was stemmed for a moment as he gave his undivided attention to the asparagus. Fourteen of the fattest asparagus that human solicitude could bring to bloom passed into his system.

And while he ate, the others were silent, though Hélène had only three asparagus on her plate. Were they depressed? He must entertain them. Well, before starting to do that, he would eat some mayonnaise with his bread. It was so good: cold, stiff, flavored to a turn. With the salmon came the Widow: ah! champagne, that was it. He drank some and found the bubbles congregating just a little above his nose. Hélène showed him how by stirring it with a spoon, most of the gas rose to the surface, while Donald, contributing his quota to Maurice's experience, pointed out that a piece of bread in the wine took the bubbles out more effectively and less noisily.

The pleasant glow of geniality in Maurice turned, with his second glass of champagne and the ham and apple-sauce, to a heightened vigor: everything for him became very visibly demarcated, it was either good or bad. Things, in a word, stood out categorically and he was the judge of them. Presently, he found as he talked that the word he had thought of seemed to escape; but he found the next best with no great difficulty. He was growing warm, more especially about the ears: the room was rather hot. To himself he acknowledged that though rather young, Frère II was not by any means a mere schoolboy: his opinion counted for something, because there was in his mind an incredibly swift activity, which, in time would make of him a man to be reckoned with. The wall opposite seemed suddenly very near and then he could swear it receded. Breath came heavily and it was a relief to sigh.

What a good dinner he had eaten! How amusing to watch the lights in the room sway a little, grow larger, then diminish, as if created by a conjurer. Well, anybody who used his brain, he informed Donald, had to go in for legerdemain: it was a question of juggling ideas. Everything was done by tricks, from his father's work in the Senate to his own bating of Dawson-Meers. Yes, in its way, what he was

accomplishing at Manford was relatively as important as anything in the world, because to him it had the same importance.

He must switch off this sort of discussion, because he found himself stuttering. Hélène said something to Donald, and Maurice burst out laughing. Just what had been said he did not know, but it was screamingly funny. How amusing, how ridiculous, how grotesque everybody else was save his father, Hélène, Donald, Brian and himself. He hoped he had not laughed too obstreperously. No, Hélène seemed to enjoy laughing with him at—well, to be quite honest—nothing in particular. Donald was leaning across the table and holding Hélène's hand, now.

Donald treated him as an equal, as a person whose opinion was at any rate worth hearing, and when heard, proved stimulating or amusing. A cigar? No thanks, he rarely smoked them, but he would like a cigarette.

"We don't smoke very much at school, you know," he announced. And then came anecdotes of ancient Manford chroniclers, part of the legend of daring that had been passed down. Many of the incidents Maurice boldly attributed to himself and Brian; he wanted them to know he really was somebody.

A waiter came in to remove the *débris* of the meal and leave coffee and liqueurs. Maurice hoped for a *crème de menthe*. The waiter's face swam before him like a wet wash-rag hung up on a clothes-line and bellying in the breeze. The room spun round a bit, he grew dizzy. Was he going to be sick?

Coffee saved him; things came back more clearly after he had had three cups. Funny that he should have thought the table so far when it was right at hand; funny that he had kicked himself by mistake under the table. It seemed to amuse Donald, too, when he was informed about it and Hélène pressed his fingers with her disengaged hand, calling him a dear child!

Donald rose.

"I've simply got to go!"

S.S.—Sept.—3

Hélène went into the bedroom. Donald turned to Maurice:

"Good-bye, youngster; it has been very pleasant for me. Don't get into too many scrapes at school. And here"—he fished in his pocket—"you may have some use for this!" He gave Maurice a sovereign. He followed Hélène into the room, stayed there a moment or two and then, with a nod to her, he presently emerged with a gladstone bag in one hand. He turned round again:

"How about the boy, Hélène? It's getting late!"

"I'll take him back, dear," she answered.

He nodded farewell and passed out of the room, whistling. Maurice listened for his footsteps, followed him mentally to the end of the hall and out of his life.

XIV

HÉLÈNE was still in the bedroom. Maurice went to her and found her sitting disconsolately on the edge of the bed. He sat beside her.

"Sad?"

"*Un peu, mon chou!*"

"Are you sorry Donald's gone?"

"Yes," she said. "One is always sorry to see one's friends go!"

"Does Donald love you?"

She smiled, an amused little smile that yet hovered on the edge of tears.

"Yes, I suppose so. We are very great friends!"

"Then why don't you and Donald get married?" suggested Maurice, inspired. "I would love that. I could come and stay with you for the Easter holidays!"

She laughed outright this time, and Maurice was glad he had cheered her up. And then she gathered him against her and kissed him as though she feared he might be taken from her at any moment; and though Maurice liked it, he could not make out why she was being so melodramatic about nothing. She rose, then, and took a bottle of perfume from the mantel, and sprinkled his face with cologne: it was called *Chypre* and

came from Violet's in Paris. Maurice loved it.

The array on her dressing-table was equally fascinating. There was rouge in lip-stick, in paste, in hard, flat cakes and in powder, wrapped in paper-boxes or in jars or tins or tubes; there were powders of every imaginable color, it seemed, and creams and washes and polishes. Nail polish he particularly liked: it possessed such a bright, sheer softness.

He opened the bottles, examining them one by one, inhaling their contents: bottles, large and long like vinegar-cruets, or thin like miniature Rhine wine bottles, or fat and square like wine decanters. They had wonderful names on gold or colored labels, with designs of flowers worked around the edge, beautiful names that touched the heart with lightly tender fingers, names that made one wish to be of age and in love and in Italy. From Houbigant and Violet and Coty and Arlys and Orsay: *Fleur d'Amour*, *Tango*, *Un jour viendra . . . Un peu d'Ambre*, *Baiser de Volupté*, *Caresse du Soir*, *Rose de mon Cœur*.

Hélène told him many things and spoke of many places, just as she had done in the train coming up from Grenoble. You could judge a woman by the perfume she used; now in Cairo, where she had been last winter, there was an Englishwoman . . . Englishwomen were funny, most of them put too much or too little on their faces. Lately they had changed a bit, but unless she had the gold-and-pink proverbial complexion, *l'anglaise* was *plutôt moche*! And some of them, even, who were so favored, had very skinny bodies or bad ankles or fat calves. Some perfumes, of course, were very expensive, but not in good taste for that reason, unless one was *une américaine* of forty. To be this, it appears, was to have license to do anything in the world, provided, also, one were rich. *Elles peuvent se payer n'importe quelle fantaisie*! French women could not, because French men had good taste and had imposed it upon their womenfolk.

Maurice thrilled with pride. At Dinard one year, she remembered how a Comte de Rochelaquerrière—a man certainly not by birth a nobleman, for he was of the quite recent vintages, possibly of Papal manufacture—had insisted upon his wife passing before him for inspection. He was, Hélène said, as hard on the poor woman as a Colonel on a crack regiment; she could never change without consulting him. But *allez!* she loved it. And even Hélène was obliged to own that the Comtesse was one of the smartest women that year. Hélène went on and on, unaware that she was telling anyone in particular anything, but rather letting herself reflect aloud, plumbing far down into the pools of memory to find the charm of old, not unremembered things.

She lay back against the pillow, whose very whiteness accentuated the amazing blackness of her hair. That in its turn brought into sharp relief the white oval of her face, the redness of her smiling lips. Her eyes were half-closed, but between the fringes of clustered, dark lashes Maurice caught now and again a gleam of violet. She puffed on her cigarette, exhaling smoke with a slight dilation of her nostrils. As she took her breath in and let it pass out with a long sigh, her body gave a tremulous start with the out-take of her deepest breaths. Yes, she was beautiful; Maurice knew now what beauty was.

He opened the window, for the room had become stuffy with smoke. As he did so, the heavy curtain passed across the path of the reading-light, so that the room was in semi-obscurity. It was good to lie across the end of the bed, his head propped up on his elbow, to stare, now at Hélène's face, dimly discerned by the faint glow of her cigarette, now out of the window at the sea. A great yellow moon hung fatly over the face of the waters, an idiotically unreal moon, like a bladder filled with gold paint to overflowing. The sky was a shimmering riot of stars and the white foam frothed as the waves broke against the shore with a lulled wash. Moths fluttered by, wheeling and whirl-

ing around the reading-lamp, to be lost in the profound mystery of the curtains. They ceased speaking: Maurice curled himself up more securely, Hélène smoked on in silence.

The exquisite witchery of beauty possessed itself of Maurice, and his dreams tapered off into vagueness. The nervousness he had experienced as a result of his escapade, the reaction at dinner and his present ease closed in upon him in a pleasurable drowsiness. He wished to think of nothing in particular at that moment. There was Hélène, who answered every detail of beauty; there was the rich, scented night with its torpid languor, its sky like a great blue mantle to which a shapeless gold blob of moon was pinned; there were the stars, myriads of them, tangled in a labyrinthodont pattern of silver. There might be other nights of beauty for him when he grew older, yet none would have the essence of this, whose very completion rendered his dreams more frailly evanescent. Words came crowding into his mind, some that existed, others he invented, all of which were beautiful music and if in themselves they were devoid of meaning, yet they were incantatory, talismanic, in the glamorous vistas they threw open, by means of the imagination, to the senses.

He understood now why Bedloe always quoted certain lines which he had considered in no whit remarkable: lines such as "*standing like Ruth amid the alien corn*" and "*Live alone in the beeloud glade.*" Ruth—well, it was a picture, perhaps, but she was no more than an Old Testament Jewess; and who wanted to live among the bees and be stung all over the place? Yet though both ideas were distasteful to Maurice, still he could see how for others they were not; indeed, himself could follow what they pointed to, ideologically, with pleasure. Words, beautiful words, blown on the wind like birds . . . words, stuff of music and dreams. . . . Patchouli . . . Frangipani . . . Yseult . . . Cecily . . . Bergamot . . . Cinnamonabar . . . Cassia. . . .

What did they mean? Damned if he

knew, but they were magic. Beauty . . . *Fleur d'Amour* . . . *Baiser de Volupté* . . . *Un jour viendra.* . . .

XV

HE was awakened by Hélène, who stood above him, shaking his shoulder. It was quite dark now, the moon had all but disappeared. He rose.

"*Quelle heure est-il?*"

"*Minuit!*"

He sighed. She said it was too late for him to go back tonight.

He shook his head ruefully.

"*Eh bien! le grand malheur! Tu coucheras ici!*" she decided.

He protested: it would inconvenience her. Besides he had no pajamas with him, nothing at all, in fact.

"*Ca ne sera pas si malin, va!*" she laughed.

In the bottom drawer of her wardrobe she found a pair of pajamas of blue silk which she handed to Maurice. He took them, thanked her, asked: were they hers?

"Yes!"

"How funny! Do you wear them? At school the chaps that wear nightgowns are considered old women or girls!"

"No, dear," she said, "I don't wear them, but they are mine; they were given to me as a present. They're a jolly color, I think!"

She smiled.

"You can go in the next room," she suggested, as she drew the counterpane off the bed Maurice was to occupy and took her nightgown from under the pillow of hers. "And you can change in there. Knock at the door when you come back, dearie. In the morning, if you want, I will go with you and interview your monster!"

He did as he was told. This was indeed an adventure. He was just a trifle shy at the intimacy they were to be thrown into together, but Lord! it was harder on her than on him. It would be nice, when first he woke, to see her there; it would be nice to lie in bed, feigning sleep, and listen to her

breathing, and watch the moonlight falling over her hair like a gold crown.

There was still a liqueur left: Maurice drank it. Hot, strong, fire! That was good. Then he lit a cigarette and began to undo his shoes. He listened to her moving in and out of her room, now running water in the bathroom, now walking to her bed. What was she doing now? Had she taken her hair down or didn't women always do that? Was she going to have a pink, blue or white nightgown? He thought, if he did not care for her so much, he would have peeped to find out just what was going on in there. But he would not in this case; he could not: she was somehow different. He knocked and she called:

"Come in!"

As he passed across the threshold, after snapping off the light in the sitting-room, he caught sight of her closing the bathroom door. Her hair, down, over her shoulders—like a black river over a field of white corn. Corn! there it was again. Like Ruth. . . . So she had a white nightgown! Hm! Those were rather nice pajamas: he wondered where they came from. Bond Street? He took the jacket off. "André & Co., Ltd., Shirtmakers, 163 Piccadilly, London," and under the label the initials D.R.S.

Hélène came out again, just as he had put on the jacket. She had been using a bottle of Milk of Almonds and Cucumbers. Her hair she brushed in front of the mirror, for a long time, and the sight filled Maurice with pleasure. As she threw her head back to catch her hair better in the comb, her body was bent forward. At last she was finished. She came over to Maurice.

"*Bonsoir, petit! Dors bien!*"

She stood over him, and then, whimsically:

"You don't snore?"

He denied the accusation vehemently. In his dormitory, to tell the truth, the boys had often stuffed cakes of pink soap in his mouth, alleging that his breathing made night hideous. Well,

tonight nothing on God's earth could get a sound out of him.

She laughed:

"Some men do!"

"I never do!" he protested again.

"Well, don't be offended!"

He put his arms around her neck, drew the flower of her face near his face, and kissed her hair, her neck, her cheeks.

"Dear, dear Hélène! Good night! And thanks awfully!"

She kissed his lips: a cool, sweet kiss.

"Good night, dear little kid!"

Three minutes later he was sound asleep.

XVI

It was five o'clock when he awoke. He went to the bathroom to take a bath before she rose, trying to do it as quietly as possible, so as not to awaken her. He found some bath-salts, which he used and enjoyed voluptuously; and after drying himself, he rubbed cologne and talcum powder over his body. He went to the sitting-room, dressed and returned, standing over her a moment. Should he rouse her? Or should he scrawl her a note of thanks, telling her how much he appreciated everything she had done? After all, she was not so very necessary: he could explain to Dawson-Meers himself. He need not trouble her to come all the way out to Manford and if he left in a few moments he would be there in time for breakfast. Suddenly she woke, smiling and rosy with sleep. He explained.

"*Tu es sur, mon petit!*"

Yes, he was sure. Dawson-Meers could be managed, school was so nearly over. In fact, the first exam. was this week—Monday.

"But we must have breakfast first!" said Hélène; "I always like to do that!"

He rang. They brought two breakfasts without being told. *Café au lait*, such as he had not had since France, and *croissants* that melted the butter you put on them.

They chatted a moment, then said

good-bye. As he went to the door she called:

"If there is any trouble, tell him to come and see me. Or write to me here!"

Maurice reflected. Then the ridiculousness of it all swept over him:

"*Mais Hélène, je ne sais même pas ton nom!*"

She laughed too, and told him it was Gauthier; and, if he liked, she added, he could write to her some time. She would love to hear from him; they would forward the mail after she left here.

Maurice walked slowly up toward Hove. He would have liked to take a cab up and arrive in style, for if the music to be faced proved cacophonous, it would have consoled him to have spent his last few moments before re-entering into captivity in a luxurious fashion. And Donald's sovereign was burning the palm that held it fast in his left trousers-pocket.

Mentally he rehearsed the forthcoming scene with Dawson-Meers. There were three possible issues. Either the great man would pay no attention whatever to him, and have him sent to bed; indeed, Maurice did not put it beyond him to keep him in bed until term-end next week. But the exams would probably interfere with that. Or he might be then and there expelled, sent back that very day instead of at the end of the week with Philippe. This he feared, yet knew he deserved. What would his father say or do? It was awful by one's acts to bring disgrace on people who were fond of one. And Philippe, who had done so well at Manford, would doubtless refuse to return to a school whence his brother had been turned away like a dog. Finally, he might just get a very hard beating. That would be the most satisfactory, save that when they returned home Philippe was sure to recount the affair to his father.

Well, the sovereign had to be broken. Maurice swerved out of his way to stop by the station and get some cigarettes at the tobacconist's stand: usually it was easier to get them at places like that, because he might have been sent by a par-

ent from the train. It would be enjoyable, too, to watch the trains a few moments and imagine himself in one going to London to meet Donald and dine with him at the United Services Club. Oh, well, anyhow, he would be riding home at the end of the week!

What should he get? Certainly not Wild Woodbines or Players' Navy Cut! What was the name of the cigarettes Donald and Hélène smoked? They had a fragrance and mellowness like wine, almost. Turkish, they were. Oh, yes, Abdulla. He bought a box. Whatever happened, he and Brian could sneak off to the lav. or behind the bushes and have a smoke. It might be their farewell one. Maurice visualized the scene and it moved him with the pathos of its dramatic action. He would tell Brian the entire adventure, then explain how the great man was firing him; and he would adjure his friend to keep his memory sacred, to defend him if gossip assailed his exit. He might even attempt an exhortation, something like this:

"It doesn't pay, old man. I've had experience, now, and I can tell you, the thing to do is to stick to work and school and do your best in everything. I've been an idle young swine and the game is not worth the candle. *Experto crede!*"

He walked up the drive. It was unnecessary to climb over the wall by the rifle-range, although some of the boys might see him from the dormitory and that would be sensational. But no! they were not yet up. Besides, the two other dormitories looked out on the front-door and if anybody was about it would make just as much of a stir.

He rang the bell, Dick let him in without question. The house was empty downstairs; not a sign of life. That made it rather melancholy and ominous, merely in contrast with the usual bustle that animated the halls and classrooms. Little oblong slips on the notice-board reminded him of the approach of examinations. He stopped a moment in the passageway under the bell, wishing to ring it to announce the arrival of Mr. Maurice Frère, but he knew it would go

hard with him, for it was rung only for lights-out and getting-up. It must have just gone a few minutes ago, because sounds of talking floated down the staircase from the dormitories. It would be an opportune moment to see Dawson-Meers alone in his room. He knocked and was told to come in.

XVII

THE great man was adjusting his collar. Short of socks and a flannel shirt on which the collar was being fixed, he was in the image of birth, plus the development of man, which expressed itself in hairy red legs glimmering in the early-morning sunlight.

"I've come back, sir!"

Dawson-Meers looked him up and down, then his glance passed beyond him as though he did not exist. The great man continued to dress. Silence. It was unbearable.

"Here I am, sir!"

Dawson-Meers snapped out that he was aware of the boy's presence and told him to hold his tongue. So, he must stand there in a nervous agony, while Dawson-Meers dressed and decided his fate. His fate was like a tie the great man chose, it would be as lightly and capriciously selected. Well, he deserved it. Dawson-Meers was Rhadamanthus, a great pagan with red, hairy legs that gleamed in the sunlight, and he was meditating upon the destiny of the wicked. Perhaps God, *en deshabillé*, looked like Dawson-Meers. Maurice did not hate him at all at that moment; by now, the prolonging of the interim before he should be dealt with had become not unpleasant when one viewed punishment so immediately future. At last he was completely dressed. He took a cigarette from the table, lighted it carefully and gave Maurice his attention.

"Where have you been?"

The words were very clear-cut and sharp; it was an accusation rather than a question.

Maurice began to tell the story, from the time he jumped over the wall.

"Pass that part," ordered Dawson-Meers. "I have heard what Henderson had to say. I take his word for it you went to the Cricket Match. Mr. Gregg discovered Henderson in town and brought him back. What happened after that?"

Maurice described his walk down to the sea-front.

"I met a chap with a guitar, sir, who lived in Sydenham and told me about playing on the beach. . . ."

"Go on, go on!"

"Then I passed by the Metropole and decided to go in!"

Dawson-Meers opined that was "a piece of damned cheek!" He knew nobody there, he was not staying there, it was rank impertinence for a cheeky young kid to go in and use the writing-room as though he had a right to. Hotels were not public: the intrusion was unpardonable. What happened next?

"I met a friend, sir."

"Who?"

"Her name is Hélène. . . . Mlle. Gauthier, sir!"

"Gauthier! French, what?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Go on!"

He told of the circumstances, described the dinner, mentioned Donald's rank, pointed out how it was too late to return after they discovered how long they had chatted. So he spent the night with Miss Gauthier.

"In her rooms?"

"Yes, sir!"

Dawson-Meers had been so cold, it was a pity he was going to get angry.

"Who is this Miss Gauthier?"

"A friend, sir."

"A friend of your people?"

"Yes, sir—no, sir—I mean we met her on the train, sir!"

"Good God, boy! What a damned little fool you are! Get on, now, and explain everything!"

Maurice thought the matter already sufficiently patent, but Dawson-Meers insisted on all manner of small details. Maurice could hide from him that he had had champagne and cigarettes, but he described the menu in detail. When

he had finished his story, Dawson-Meers sat silent, on the edge of the bed, looking out of the window.

"Before I decide how to deal with you, I want to ask you why you bolted?"

So, his fate hung in the balance. Eloquence and naturalness come to his aid! Well, he had been sick of being in every twelve o'clock break, and every half-holiday for as long as he could remember. The hardness of the punishment seemed to appeal to the great man; he clicked his tongue as though in gentle remonstrance with himself for keeping the boy in so much. Maurice could feel him coming his way. And then he had not been let off for the match, yesterday, and everybody is. So he and young Henderson did a bunk over the wall! Then he repeated the entire story, until stopped, adding that Miss Gauthier said if he got into trouble he was to write to her and she would explain to Mr. Dawson-Meers. Yes, she lived at the Metropole.

A long silence. Then, through a haze which feelings of all sorts placed between him and the light of Mr. Dawson-Meers' sentence, he heard the latter saying:

"Sha'n't punish you this time. . . . Try another way; you've had about as much punishment as you can stand. . . . Perhaps this will make you do better next year. . . . When you want to be a fool, remember this and you may behave. . . ."

"Thank you, sir!"

"But remember . . . you can't do this sort of thing . . . go round the place staying with a strange woman . . . met on the train. Why, she might be anybody or anything. . . . Now, what if I turned up and said I had been staying with somebody I met on the train . . . what would that be like?"

It would be damned funny, Maurice thought. But he said:

"Yes, sir!"

That was always a safe thing to say.

"Henderson has given me his word to speak of this to nobody. You can see

for yourself how it would be a disgrace to the school, can't you?"

"Yes, sir!"

"But that's not why I'm letting you off, Frère. I could easily expel you and Henderson. . . . Perhaps we have been a bit hard on you this year . . . not used to foreigners, you know . . . and I can't always get the hang of anyone not British. . . ."

"Yes, sir!"

"Try and be like your brother, a fine boy, that! Try and take a bit of interest in your work. Come and see me next year if you have anything on your mind. We can start with a clean slate, Frère, and do better. I want you to try!"

"Yes, sir. I will, sir!"

"And don't forget . . . no repeating this business to your friends!"

"No, sir, I promise I sha'n't say a word!" Maurice assured him.

Wasn't the old boy being decent to him! Whatever was happening? Was the world coming to an end?

"You see, this Miss Gauthier . . . strange woman . . . might be anything or anybody. . . . It does not do to be mixed up. . . . Promise to do better. . . . Go, boy!"

XVIII

It was at five o'clock when Maurice awoke, on Saturday morning, after an almost sleepless night. A clear, light summer's day; it would be hot later on, but now everything was very pleasant in the coolness of the morning. He jumped out of bed, regretting that he would not wake up the other boys; how much they were missing by staying in bed! On a morning like this one should be up and abroad early.

The last day, the last day of the year! Colored ties, instead of the school tie; for breakfast there would be porridge and ham and toast and jam. That rhymed. Funny! And in chapel, old Dawson-Meers would jaw to them, a ten-minute apologia, on the end of the year, and what was to become of those who left for good to go into the world

of the public-school, and those who returned to take their places. The usual end-of-term sermon. And then they would sing: "Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing," the hymn specially chosen for school's ending. Dawson-Meers would be jawing, and Maurice would be thinking: "You are a very great man, Dawson-Meers, but you don't know where I've been, sir! I've been to visit the strange woman who might be anything or anybody, sir! That's why I did not eat much porridge and ham and toast and jam!"

He dressed carefully, cleaned his nails (a very rare procedure), chose his loudest tie, magenta, salmon and green. Salmon: that was what he had had at dinner with Donald and her. Salmon: pink, cool, fresh, like Brian's face even now in sleep. Heigh-ho! Brillantine: he would put lots of it on his hair. He wanted to plaster his hair down. What else should he do? Wear an overcoat? No—too beastly hot. It was like Manford to force him to wear one away, when it was so manifestly fine, not because he needed it, but because it was a rite, more or less. That—and porridge and ham and toast and jam and the hymn: "Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing, Thanks for mercies past received!" He had had a lot of mercies, what? Yes, I don't think! Manford had, on the whole, intruded somehow between the mercies this pleasant Church of England god had deigned to shower on Maurice and the intended recipient. Ha!

Well, he was off to France today: that was fun. And after all Manford was not life; it was a kind of halt you had to make on your way to life, a delay. Imprisoned, more sheltered from things than ever you would be, how near life were you? And oh! God! this was just the end of the first year. He had at least six years of it before him. Six years, six years! Oh, never mind! This morning was going to be a lark! And he did know a bit about life. Life was this, the world of men. You met a charming lady in the train and later ran into her at Brighton; she took you to

her rooms, plied you with the most toothsome food and delicious wines, introduced you to a friend of the family who could describe any naval battle you asked about, explain why it was so particularly ignominious that Admiral Byng should have been shot on his own quarter-deck, and quote Voltaire. When he left, you were a sovereign the richer! And you were welcome whenever and wherever you came. People were interested in you and if at all possible they would do their best to make things comfortable and pleasant for you. That was life, and not this crude imitation, where, cooped up together, fifty boys, sick of the sight of each other and of their masters, constantly meditated mischief.

It was now a quarter to six. Maurice, fully dressed, walked downstairs and took his hat from his locker. No school-caps this time; Mr. Maurice Frère was in civilian clothes, thank you very much! And Mr. Maurice Frère was going to the station on foot and commandeer the largest cab in front of it; in this, the largest cab in Brighton, by Jove! Mr. Maurice Frère was going to drive to the Metropole for breakfast with Miss Hélène Gauthier. Ah! but it was a fine world!

As Maurice drove from the station in his four-wheeler with a sleepy driver and two fresh horses, he decided he would have the driver take him back to Manford and wait outside, and then, when the school bus arrived to take the boys to the station, the driver was to announce: "Mr. Frère's carriage!" and he and Brian would drive off in glory to the London train. That would be superb, magnificent. He had lots of tin: God bless old Donald for his sovereign.

The hotel was deserted. At the dining-room, where two men were putting polish on the floor, Maurice stopped to order two breakfasts: rolls, butter, jam, *café au lait*, to be immediately sent to Room 341. The whole thing would be a surprise. First a knock and enter Maurice, in the splendor of his straw lid and his four-and-sixpenny tie of

magenta, salmon and green (would she like it?). Then he would mention having ordered breakfast, and when that was brought he would tip the waiter somewhat carelessly, as Donald had done. They would sit on the bed together, he on the edge of hers, and eat. He would tell her of his departure that day and they would arrange to correspond, so if ever they were in the same place again they could meet. The lift was not running, so Maurice walked up. A slatternly charwoman emerged from a closet at the end of the hallway. Maurice answered her "Mornin', sorr!" jauntily, with a certain assurance and dignity.

Ah! 341! He knocked.

Silence.

He knocked again. A rustling sound from within, and then Hélène's voice: "Come in!"

He opened the door and entered the sitting-room. He would not call his name from there, but pass into the bedroom, the door of which was ajar, and surprise Hélène by running to her and kissing her. The sun came streaming through the window, out of which last week he had gazed at the sea, and she had said: "*Oh! que c'est joli!*"

Well, he would reconstruct that moment, reconsecrate the window by gazing out of it now, in the golden light of morning, with the sun dancing an argent saraband over the waters. So! Hélène's voice; sleepy . . . languid . . . "*C'est le déjeuner!*"

The sun was pouring into her bedroom too. He could see it through the crack of the half-opened door. He would move there now and show her that Mr. Frère's *déjeuner* was to be preceded by that gentleman in person. He must peep through the aperture to find out if she would be ready for him, else he would have to announce himself and that would spoil it. Otherwise, thinking it was the breakfast, she might wait, prepare herself, and he would enter. She would forgive him the very slight indiscretion in view of his exquisite attention.

He caught sight of Hélène first, her hair down her back like a school-kid, smoking a cigarette. Then he followed the beams of sunlight across her room to the other bed and saw blue pajamas . . . another cigarette blowing smoke in little clouds . . . he heard a voice he seemed to know very well . . . noticed red, hairy legs, gleaming in the sunlight.

Where had he seen that before? Red, hairy legs, hairy red legs gleaming in the sunlight . . . and that voice. The man turned.

Dawson-Meers!

XIX

MAURICE slammed the door, ran down the hall. Tears were in his eyes, tears of rage, disappointment, mortification. The day was poisoned for him: no joy . . . no joy . . . no joy possible. Ugh! how beastly! So that was life! "Strange woman . . . she might be anyone or anything . . . now, if I were to go and do that . . . she might be anyone or anything. . . ."

Poison, thrown into the mellow wine of today! Hell! Hell! Well, that's today, only today, and there's the future. A future one can build for oneself out of words, even now while waiting to live it in deeds; a future that had nothing to do with breakfasts and women that might be anybody or anything, and red, hairy legs gleaming in the sunlight. "And Esau was a hairy man!" that was how the Bible said it. What a world of foulness and loathing one could lay in the word "hairy"!

No—this life one could look forward to was beautiful! It had something to do with "*bees in the bee-loud glade*" and "*pale-mouthed prophet dreaming*" . . . it was conjured up by incantatory and talismanic words that opened for the imagination new horizons of glamorous magic . . . by words like birds borne on the wind . . . fluttering by, the stuff of music and dreams. . . . *Fleur d'Amour* . . . *Baiser de Volupté* . . . *Un jour viendra* . . .

Fable in the Primitive Manner

By Margaret R. Delano

ELLEN was queer. Her mother thought so, her father thought so, the neighbors said so. She liked it. She had to be something.

Her hair was straight, thin and oily, her face was like her hair and her legs were straight and thin. As a child she lied and stole things. Once her father whipped her, but she bit his finger so hard that the doctor had to come and sew it up. She was a horrid child.

After a while she grew up. She was horrider than ever, but she was beautiful. No one knew how it happened, she didn't herself, but there she was. Her hair was as straight as ever but it was shiny and alluring. Her eyes and mouth were compelling, and her legs were masterpieces.

She still lied and stole things, mostly other people's husbands. She didn't want them, but it had got to be a habit.

Then she met Gerald. He was good and pure and innocent. She loved him. They were married and she resolved to be a good wife to him. Every morning she got up first

and closed the window. Every evening she greeted him with a sweet smile when he came home. She had two children, dear little things, good, like Gerald.

One morning she woke up and felt cross. She looked at Gerald. He was asleep. His eyes were closed and his mouth open. He looked depressingly good. She poked the shoe-horn down his throat and strangled him.

Bye and bye she was old. She was what is known as a "very wicked old lady." Young people adored her and she taught them how to lie. She grew very rich. No one knew how. She was worse than ever. She hired little boys to push old women as they were getting off trolley cars. She was hateful.

Once she thought she was going to die, and gave all her money away to charity. When she got well she wanted it back, but they wouldn't give it to her.

This threw her into such a rage that she died anyway. It was a good thing. She was awful.



THERE is this advantage about a red-headed woman: She saves a man the trouble of making up his mind.



WOMEN never love a man for what he is worth. They love him for what he is worth to them.



In a Strange Land

By Louise Saunders

I

"NOW," said the Senator, sitting sideways on one fat hip and looking up into Matilda's face, "tell me about the little book."

"What little book? Oh, mine—" She laughed nervously. "Did my brother—?"

"Yes. Elmer says that you have written a book to amuse yourself. What's in it, flowers and little birdies? That's what young ladies write about, isn't it, flowers and little birdies?"

He was trying to be amusing. It was so kind of him! And he was a "big" man. Elmer had told her in their rooms at the hotel, before they started for dinner, what a big man he was. He had been president of a copper company, "the biggest," said Elmer, in the world, and now he was a senator! The dinner had been given for him. After Elmer's long introduction that she knew by heart—Elmer had rehearsed it before her many times in the hotel—and he had laid his napkin on the table and faced them, smiling, how they had cheered him! Fifteen hundred people! They had sung "For he's a jolly good fellow," beating time on the cluttered tables and afterward "fine speech the Senator made," everyone had said, "so humorous." Strange that she should shrink like that when he mentioned her book, as if he had thrust his hand into some delicate, exquisite pattern and mussed it up, strange that everything should seem so suddenly dreary, the music, the loud metallic clatter of the crowd; strange that that funny lump

should be in her throat. It came there so often, for no reason at all.

She would have to answer him—she didn't want to be rude—just as she had been made to explain her "fairy places" when she was a child. She used to make the "fairy places" of green moss and colored stones. They were intensely beautiful to her, tiny realms of magic, full of rich gleaming mystery. But Elmer had discovered them one day. He had thought it so "cute" of her to have made them. "She has such imagination," her mother would say to people after that; "tell us about your dear little fairy places, Matilda." And Matilda would tell, obediently, painfully, but she had never made them again. It was somehow like that.

"My book has never been published," she began.

"Never been published! Well, well," said the Senator.

His eyes roved absently and amiably over the dancing couples. With relief Matilda saw that he had lost interest in her book. Of course, if it had never been published, it was of no importance.

"Nice crowd of young people here tonight," he observed.

"Yes," she agreed. Young people! Where were they? She studied with renewed interest the kaleidoscopic swirl of dancers, scrawny women with loose cheeks and silver things around their heads like bandages, rigid fat women in glittering dresses whose figures shelved mountainously before and behind, red-faced men, so many of them, all alike, who seemed to have been moulded into the shape of their office

chairs, whose heads drooped forward from their collars like the heads of guinea hens, square men with gray hair, who steered their partners through the crowd in the detached, preoccupied manner of a spinster sewing a seam. Surely he must have been joking. She turned to him. No, he was serious!

"Oh, God! Oh, God!" she found herself saying under her breath. "Oh, God!"

Why did that exclamation keep running through her head on occasions like these, especially at Elmer's public dinners? It was so silly. It was so inappropriate. She laughed suddenly.

"What's the joke?" asked the Senator, beaming at her.

Heavens, what could she say now! People don't laugh for no reason at all. "I—I was thinking of your speech," she answered breathlessly.

"Yes, I've got together quite a collection of funny stories. People like them. They liven things up a bit. We men, mustn't be too highbrow when there are ladies present." He leaned back, his hands in his pockets. "You ought to try a turn or two. I'd ask you to skip the light fantastic with me, but I never was a dancing man. My mother didn't approve of it." He paused, looking at her.

"Then, of course, you couldn't—"

"She was very religious," he explained further.

Elmer swung past with a girl in a cerise dress, a band of rhinestones around her bobbed hair.

"Having a good time?" he shouted over the music.

"Yes, delightful," Matilda answered.

"Look here, Senator, I'll have to have a word with you about this violent flirtation with my sister."

"Oh, you awful man! Is that really your sister?" lisped the girl in the cerise dress, looking up into his face archly.

"Yes, that's my sister. She's a quiet little thing, so I jolly her along. It does her good."

"You must be very proud of Elmer

tonight," observed the Senator. "He introduced me in great style."

"Yes," said Matilda.

Yes, yes. Could she say nothing but that? What was the matter with her? Was she stupid? Perhaps she had no social tact, that must be it, and she was boring him. She knew it. Poor thing, he didn't want to stay with her. She ought to excuse herself for his sake and go away somewhere—to the dressing-room. She thought with longing of the peace of the dressing-room, of the two quiet maids there, of the inert cloaks hanging calmly side by side waiting for their owners; of the music that would sound so gay and charming when muffled behind the closed doors. But Elmer wouldn't like that. The Senator was a big man and one of Elmer's friends. It was important, Elmer had said, that he keep "on the right side of him." But what would he think if she had told him that she was ashamed of Elmer's speech, that she had hung her head in agony, her cheeks flaming, as he roared out his commonplaces, gestured largely, worked himself up into flimsy climaxes that meant nothing. She had looked nervously at the people around her under her lowered lids. Surely they must be laughing at him, and she hated them for it. Surely they must see his pitiful, childish conceit as he went on, dragging in the names of millionaires and financiers—"my friend this, my friend that—," speaking with an obvious modesty that could deceive none of his own successes—"even a small man like me—in my humble way I have—." She could hardly bear it. But after it was over she had seen, with intense relief, as if she had been a child hiding something she didn't want people to know was there under her apron, that they miraculously had not noticed. They had liked his speech! It had been a narrow escape, a piece of unbelievable good luck!

"I'll tell you what I will do, little lady," said the Senator, getting up and standing before her flicking his coattails like a plump sparrow, "I'll find someone to dance with you."

"Oh, please don't trouble, Senator Rogers," she implored, as he disappeared.

II

PERHAPS it was just as well. He wanted, of course, to talk to his own friends, and it was so kind of him. She felt a thrill of anticipation. Perhaps he would bring someone nice, some charming, easy person with a sense of humor, who could dance, really dance. It was possible. There were so many people. Someone, she narrowed her eyes defiantly, who might even appreciate how beautifully she was dressed. Hers, she knew at any rate, was the only gown of real distinction among those ruffles and rhinestones.

Elmer had begged her before they started to put some rouge on her cheeks. "Don't be a prig, Mat, everybody does it now—all the swells." But she had refused for a reason of her own, because she knew that the creamy pallor of her skin was perfect with her close dark hair, the pure lines of her face, and her strange eyes—"eyes shaped like flying gulls' wings." A man whom she had met on a train on one of her trips to Chicago had said that about her eyes. He was an artist. Elmer hadn't liked him, "He's not our sort," and she had never seen him again, but she had treasured that remark of his. It gave her a keen, knife-like joy to think of it.

"Eyes shaped like flying gulls' wings." She couldn't be very ugly if her eyes could have inspired him to say such a pretty thing. For, strangely enough, it was only when she was in a crowd of people as she was tonight, among Elmer's friends, who were her friends, for she had no others, among high-colored, full-blown women who pushed and chattered, eagerly friendly women, indiscriminating in their shallow, facetious flirtatiousness, that she felt dull, heavy, commonplace. But often, when she returned from these affairs, and had locked the door of her hotel room, she would go to her mirror and, letting

her cloak slip from her shoulders, stand for a long time in front of it, with an impersonal feeling of pity for the girl she saw there.

"You are beautiful, beautiful," she would breathe at last. "Poor darling, I know. You are, you are."

Senator Rogers came back with a huge pear-shaped man in a brown suit.

"Mr. Blodgett, I want you to know Miss Humphrey, a fine young lady spoiling for a dance."

He smiled triumphantly, looking from one to the other.

"May I have the pleasure?" asked Mr. Blodgett.

"Mr. Blodgett," the Senator went on, "is president of one of the biggest banks in Bisbee, Arizona. Don't you listen to him if he tries to make you put your money into it."

"But if it's such a big bank, Senator Rogers," said Matilda, "I'm sure that my money would be very safe there."

Mr. Blodgett looked uneasy. "What bank do you patronize?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't patron—I never had a bank, except a little lead one shaped like a church."

He clasped her. Ugh! He was soft! She felt as if she were being pressed into a tremendous cushion. How queer that his shoulder where her hand rested should seem to be quite lean and hard, yet there was that softness in front. It was horrible!

"I didn't have time to get into my dress suit tonight," explained Mr. Blodgett. "We Westerners are not much on clothes."

The music crashed in maddening rhythm.

Matilda felt suddenly gay.

"But some Westerners," she said, "wear beautiful clothes, sombreros and bright handkerchiefs around their necks and long furry trousers."

"We don't have anything of that sort in Bisbee," explained Mr. Blodgett. "It's quite a city. Have you ever been there?"

"No." If only he would go faster; if he would keep time!

"You must visit it some day. We

have a fine residential section. Mr. Perry, one of our leading citizens, has just completed a beautiful home on Fairview Street."

They ambled sedately down the huge ballroom. The lights changed from red to green, from green to amber, so that the hundreds of couples seemed to be swirling at the bottom of a huge, fantastic sea of color. The careless, irresponsible music caught playfully at Matilda's feet as if it tugged at her with bright streamers of sound.

"I never used to do this sort of thing," said Mr. Blodgett, "but these modern dances are so easy; it's just walking."

Yes, that's what he did—walk! He walked her backward down the room, skipped around the corners, then walked again. It was stupid to call it dancing. If only he would let her go, if he would take his heavy hand off her back, she felt that she could dance exquisitely, exquisitely! She would be blown about like a plume of smoke—fly, perhaps, up to the gilded ceiling and back again. It seemed possible.

"Nice floor," observed Mr. Blodgett.

The music stopped. Mr. Blodgett released her and signified his desire for more with loud and regular applause. It began again. He pressed her to his watch-chain and they started once more, their leisurely promenade.

"Fine lot of young people here to-night."

"Yes."

"Do you reside in New York—er—Miss Huntington, if I remember rightly? Where is your home, may I ask?"

"Oh, I have a great many homes," replied Matilda, "scattered over the country. They are all hotels."

"We have an excellent hotel in Bisbee. It has recently been constructed by the United States Hotel Company."

"Have you? Then it will surely be my home some day. We scarcely miss one. You see, my brother travels all the time on business and, as I am his secretary, I have to trail after him."

"Ah, his secretary—I hope that when you come to Bisbee you will look us up.

Mrs. Blodgett would be pleased to show you about."

"Thank you." She mused for a minute on Mrs. Blodgett. Poor thing! But perhaps she didn't mind—and, of course, when she married him he wasn't soft like that. She tried to strip the years from him, to reconstruct him young, ardently in love with the prospective Mrs. Blodgett. It was impossible.

"Your brother is well known in the West. He is a very big man."

"Yes," she answered wearily. Good heavens, they were all so big! She was tired of big ones. If only she could meet a small man, she was sure that she would like him better. What did they do when they were small? Perhaps she would marry one. She could picture herself leading him by the hand into Elmer's presence, Elmer's horror. It made her laugh.

"Excuse me," said Mr. Blodgett, leaning over, "I didn't catch that."

"No, I don't suppose you did."

After all there was no reason, as there was with the Senator, why she should try to be nice to him. If, by her silence, she put Elmer on the wrong side of Mr. Blodgett, it wouldn't matter. There was no use in this unprofitable groping for a point of contact with his mind. With relief she let down the shutters before her own thoughts. He might think her stupid—uninteresting. She didn't care.

After he left her, she watched him go up to a girl standing near. Her ultra-blonde hair was puffed out to two hard yellow cushions over her ears and scrappily pinned together behind.

"I don't suppose that she ever looks at the back," thought Matilda, studying her. "She ought to. It's silly to save it all for the front."

"Say, George," said the girl with the hair, "the crowd is all coming over to my rooms afterward for a highball. Want to join us?"

"That sounds good to me," said Mr. Blodgett, smacking his lips.

A man slapped him boisterously on

the back. "No water wagon for George."

Mr. Blodgett laughed recklessly. "Bet your life I'm not on the water wagon when I come to New York."

"Come on," said the girl. "Get my cloak for me, will you? I'm cold."

"Never mind, Cutie, I'll keep you warm in the taxi."

Thus Mr. Blodgett, unrestrained. And he had, thank heaven, treated her like a maiden aunt! It was curious But how stupid it must have been for him to have had to talk to her when he wanted to behave like that. It must have been quite as dull for him as it was for her. She hadn't thought of that before. Oh well, he was happy now. She watched him caper down the hall with the tolerant sympathy of an old lady who sees a little boy run off to play after a lesson.

III

AND really, after that, it wasn't so bad. She rather enjoyed sitting on a little gilt chair, near the door, in a tiny backwater, shut in by ever changing groups of rainbow tinted women and black-coated men who seemed to tower above her. They brushed by her knees, she heard their scraps of conversation, their laughter, but they were completely unaware of her existence. It was as if she wore an invisible ring. She couldn't go home for a long time. She knew that. Elmer always stayed until the end. Then he would come up to her, breathing rapidly, like a seal after a long swim under water. He would stretch out his legs in the taxi and reminisce contentedly. "Did you see that girl I was dancing with? Her father is one of the biggest real estate men in the county. My speech went off in fine style, didn't it?" And she would agree, sympathize, exclaim, as he expected her to do, for wasn't she his "good little pal," but in her heart she would feel a leaden weariness that she didn't understand.

Presently she noticed a man leaning against one of the glass doors that led

to the hall. He seemed different from the others. He was tall and thin, and he watched the people around him with amused, half shut eyes. Perhaps, she thought, he knows what real gaiety can be—gaiety delicate, elusive, iridescent, as different from this heavy footed, earthy noisiness as is a shimmering bubble from a leather ball. Perhaps he felt, as she did, the cheapness of it all, for that's what it seemed to her. That's what all life had come to be to her, cheap, cheap, cheap. There was a life in books and in plays that was not cheap, but it had never touched her. It might not be true. Perhaps there were no charming, clever people. But at least she knew that there must be genuine people, people of dignity and it was because these brash, untutored men represented, as Elmer had said, "the most important men of the country," because they were respected and looked up to, that they were so revolting when they gambolled, like playful hippopotami.

The man at the door turned and met her eyes. She looked away but she was acutely conscious that he was still watching her. He was watching her, appraising her. She felt his glance, like a tiny searchlight, playing over her profile as she gazed at one of the musicians, jigging up and down, a saxophone hanging ludicrously from his lips. Was he thinking, that man at the door, "There's a girl I would like to talk to. She could tell me beautiful things. Our thoughts would open, one after the other, like flowers." Or it would be more like exploring an array of little locked boxes. He carried the keys to hers. She only could unlock his. There were jewels in them, perhaps, that she didn't know were there. After he had lifted the lids, she might see them flash. Why not? Who was there to care what she did—except Elmer. Of course, Elmer would never believe it of her. He thought her "prim." Because she refused to dabble in the shallows, he didn't know that she was capable of diving deep,

deep into recklessness where the waters were clean and pure. She turned her head and smiled.

Immediately but slowly, as if he first unhooked his shoulder from the door, he came toward her. Her heart beat furiously. It was going to be deliciously interesting, all the more interesting because he was a stranger. What would he say? How would he begin? She would tell *him* about her book right away. She was dying to tell him.

"Hello, little bright eyes," he said, "you look lonesome."

Oh, how dared he, how dared he speak to her! How dared he think that she meant that! Something within her that had been softly undulating, graciously flowing toward him, shriveled up suddenly—became a tight, hard little stone in her heart. She hated him. She hated herself, intensely, bitterly.

"You are mistaken," she answered, with stinging coldness, "I'm not at all lonely."

She left him abruptly and walked through the crowd, her head high, her nostrils dilated. It was as if she had voluntarily touched something horrible. She wanted to shake the memory of him, disdainfully from her finger tips, like a queen, but it clung to her. She was horrible too!

"Will you be good enough to let me pass?"

A group of people were blocking the doorway. One of them, a man with

gray hair, was doing an imitation of a Spanish dance. He had a woman's fan tied on his head. The others were laughing riotously.

"Go it, Charlie, you're a *scream!*"

Matilda stood still before them. A fierce scorn burned in her.

"Will you please let me through the door?"

As she passed them, she heard a girl giggle behind her back, "My word, what's the matter with *her?*"

What *was* the matter with her? She sat down in the dressing room and gazed at herself with wide eyes. What was it? She could not understand. She was always stretching out her hands trustfully to happiness only to have them cruelly and vindictively rapped. Well, it could never happen again. Hereafter she would be cold and reserved. Hereafter she would expect nothing! People couldn't hurt her if she held herself aloof from life. If she were indifferent, she would be impregnable—as old people are. That was it,—indifference, icy, cold indifference. She gripped the edge of the dressing table. Her eyes gleamed at her in the mirror. Mercy, they were like a cat's eyes, huge, almond shaped, green! Slowly, as she looked at them, they glassed over with tears. A tear crawled through her lashes and streaked down her cheek. She was crying, that girl in the mirror—silly thing! But Matilda knew that she, herself, could not cry. She had decided to be hard, indiff—Oh God! Oh God!



Two Buzzards

By Gonzalez W. Mitnick

ONE drowns, gorged,
On a dead tree by the slaughter-house.
The other,
In heaven-slicing spirals,
Goes up against the sun.
Hunger is holy.

Répétition Générale

By H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan

§1

PATRIOTISM.—Of all men, the Englishman is the only one whose patriotism has about it an air of dignity. The Englishman loves his country in the way that a man loves a patient, faithful and sympathetic woman to whom he has been married for years on end and whose life with her has been replete with comfort and peace. The Frenchman, on the other hand, loves his country as he would a gaudy chorus nymph whose anatomy had fascinated him; the German, his, as a sophomore loves his college football team; and the American, his, as Jumbo loved Barnum.

§2

Hedonism.—Every man is a hedonist. The only difference between the two varieties of the sons of Aristippus is that one hedonist seeks his goal of pleasure on earth and that the other seeks his in heaven. The latter, posturing his anti-Cyrenaic doctrine, is actually the more selfish and more positively hedonistic of the two, since where the former seeks only the transitory and impermanent pleasures that the earth and his days upon it can vouchsafe to him the other seeks instead, under the gaudy labels of altruism, idealism, etc., with which he self-deceptively plasters himself, the everlasting and immutable pleasures of the world hereafter.

§3

The Denaturized Gob.—Few phenomena offer more refined and instructive

S.S.—Sept.—4

entertainment to the public psychologist than the American navy's decline in popularity during the past twenty-five years. At the time of the Spanish-American War, as everyone sentient in those days will recall, it was easily the premier service in the popular regard, and in even the least of its exploits the great masses of the plain people took a violent and vociferous pride. They were proud, too, of the army, and its heroic feats against the Hunnish hordes of Spain, and one of the great captains of that army was made President for his stupendous feats of blood and blather in the field; but it was the navy that they cherished most, and the popular heroes that it produced were more numerous than those of the army, and in the main they were far more fondly cherished. Even the immortal Roosevelt, it will be remembered, was half a navy man, and what got him into the White House, I believe, was less his colossal butcheries in the land battles of the war, important though they were to the cause of human liberty, than his long antecedent struggles to free the navy from the politicians, and make it fit to fight. The navy, indeed, was popular before the war began, or even threatened. The army could tackle and massacre a whole tribe of Indians without causing half the public thrill that followed the bombardment of a Venezuelan coast village by the White Squadron, with a total loss of but one blind cripple crippled in the other leg. This White Squadron, I more than suspect, was the actual cause of the war itself. From the day it first put to sea the booboisie watched it with glowing pride, and longed for a

sight of it in action. If it had not been so handily cruising in Latin-American waters, glittering truculently in the sunshine, there would have been a great deal less public indignation over the wrongs of the Cubans. So superb a fighting arm was surely not designed by God to rust in the scabbard. Thus the fashion arose of drawing it out and poking it into Caribbean and South Atlantic rat-holes. During the half dozen years before the laying of the Spanish dragon was formally undertaken, such heroes as Schley and Fighting Bob Evans carried the White Squadron into half the ports to the southward, and knocked over a few church steeples in most of them. In the end, it was just such an enterprise that took the *Maine* into Havana harbor, and provided the legal excuse for the war itself.

This was twenty-five years ago. To-day, it must be obvious that there is very little public pride in the navy, and almost no public interest. I doubt that one American schoolboy out of ten thousand could name its present ranking officer; between 1890 and 1900 every schoolboy knew all the admirals by face and by name, and most of the captains, and the patriotic epigrams of the more articulate of them were chalked upon every schoolyard fence in the land. I was myself a boy in those days, and remember even today such forgotten heroes of the time as Admiral Gherardi, who commanded the White Squadron in 1893 and 1894, and was retired before the Spanish War; his portrait was on the cigarette cards, along with those of Fighting Bob Evans and Lillian Russell. Later on, having grown more reflective and critical, I specialized in the Sampson-Schley controversy, and was a bitter partisan of Schley. Dewey, Clark, Evans, Ridley, Hobson (God save us!), Ensign Bagley, Yeoman Ellis, Sigsbee, Wainwright—all these eminent tars were as real to the boys of that era as John L. Sullivan or Amos Rusie. Turn now to today. When the newspapers, a few months ago, announced

that a gentleman named Admiral Sims had denied that the German U-boat commanders committed the atrocities credited to them during the late war, how many American boys recognized his name? I myself, though I am a historian by profession, boggled him at first glance, mistaking him for a British officer. For the life of me, I could not tell you the name of another American naval officer . . . Second thought: there was Admiral Benson. But what he did in the war, save involve himself in some controversy that has been forgotten, I can't tell you. No other name occurs to me, though I scratch my head and try various mnemonic dodges. Try me on the names of the commanders who fought the celebrated Creel battle with the U-boats, and I'll have to slide down among the morons. If there was a Hobson in that war, I can't recall him. I remember many English and German commanders—von Tirpitz, von Scheer, Jellicoe, Müller of the Emden, and so on—but not a single American.

The fact is, of course, that the part the American navy played in the war, though it was unquestionably important, was quite devoid of the more spectacular varieties of gallantry, and so it failed to make heroes. The battles fought were fought by government press-agents, not by the navy itself; the rest was chiefly dangerous but dull policing, with some uninspiring running of ferry-boats. The navy, as everyone knows, became a funk-hole for draft-dodgers. This may account, in some measure, for the present public apathy regarding it; it is not currently brilliant and heroic, and hence it is not charming. But its decay in popularity, I believe, antedated the war by several years; it was in the shadows long before Admiral Sims transferred his swivel-chair from Washington to London. What caused the change? Is it that the American people have lost their old taste for the sea, and, in particular, their old delight in the sort of heroes that it produces? Or is it that the navy itself has actually lost some of its old

romance and color? I incline to think that the latter explanation explains more than the former. My hazard is that the man who made the American navy unpopular was the Hon. Josephus Daniels, and that he did it by trying to convert every battleship into a chautauqua and Sunday-school. In the days when the arrival of a naval vessel in port was the signal for hot times ashore, with the saloons packed to the doors, and all the town's wicked women out *en masse*, and the streets made picturesquely perilous by squads of drunken and roaring gobs—in those days every poor but ambitious boy, when the job of tying up packages and running errands began to palsy him, let his fancy turn toward thoughts of stealing off to foreign parts, the Republic's quarter in his pocket and riotous and attractive company all about him. The sailor of that era was an obscene but highly charming fellow. A great spaciousness was in him. He bore the scars of the constabulary espantoons of distant and romantic lands. He was a wholesale lover, a three-bottle man, a well of astounding profanity. He challenged and held the admiration of every adventurous youth. He was romance in baggy breeches, hell-bent down the mysterious by-ways of the world.

Josephus changed all that. A Christian of tender conscience and a firm believer in hell for the sinful, it appalled him to observe that nine-tenths of the young men under his official charge were obviously headed for the fire. When he got his secret reports of their doings in Port Said, Callao, Singapore, Odessa, Smyrna, Vera Cruz, Norfolk, Va., and other such seaboard stews—when these lurid documents began pouring in upon him from missionaries, Y. M. C. A. secretaries and other godly men, he staggered under the horror, and was unfit for business for days afterward. Having recourse to prayer, he was presently given counsel by a voice from the burning bush. To hear was to act. First, he abolished rum from the navy, and forced even the oldest admirals, some of

whom had been pickled for years and years, to go upon the dubious water of far-flung and zymotic ports. Secondly, he forbade the enlistment of young men who were fugitives from justice for dog-stealing, moonshining, window-smashing and other such gross felonies—the mainstays of the navy in the old days. Thirdly, he set up night schools on every battleship, in charge of Christian men like himself, and then day schools, and then schools running both day and night, and to the customary instruction in the three R's he added the whole curriculum of the Y. M. C. A., from double-entry book-keeping to public speaking, and from show-card writing to venereal prophylaxis. Today a young man goes into the navy from his native farm with nothing in his head save a vast yearning to get away from the smell of cows—and comes out in three years an accomplished paperhanger, with some knowledge of the saxophone, electric wiring and first aid to the injured. The old enlistment posters used to show a gob in a rickshaw with a Japanese cutie; the new ones show him practising as a house and sign painter. The old navy showed the boys the world, and taught them the difference between Swedish punch and Javanese arrack; the new navy converts them into sanitary plumbers and bookkeepers, and teaches them how to lead a prayer-meeting.

Is it any wonder that it declines in popularity—that the youth of the land is neglectful of its eminent commanders, and has to be lured into enlistment by the arts of the grind-shop auctioneer? The Y. M. C. A. already reigns universally on the dry land of the Republic; only the remotest yokel in the highest hills can hope to escape its tentacles, and even he is fetched by its sinister sister, the chautauqua. When he dreams of the sea, he dreams of a realm that is free from all this—of a realm still barbarous, unchastened and romantic—a realm of free cavorting and exhilarating adventure. But when he gets to the recruiting-office, the

first thing he sees is a large lithograph showing a class of gobs being instructed in algebra, grammar and Christian doctrine. The master-at-arms who receives him hasn't got the old naked Venus tattooed on his arm; he has instead a portrait of Dwight L. Moody, and in his button-hole is a button testifying that he has recited 52 successive Golden Texts without an error and brought 20 heathen Danish sailors to the mourners' bench. Instead of the old booby-hatch for souses in this recruiting-office, there is now a gospel hall with a melodeon. The talk is not of the yellow gals in Valparaiso, the powerful red wines of Naples, the all-night shows of Marseilles, the police of Liverpool and Kiel, but of the advantages of learning the trades of tin-roofer, cost accountant and hardwood finisher. The rustic candidate, his head buzzing with romance, is floored with statistics and plunged into a bath of bichloride of mercury. No wonder his stomach turns and his heart is broken! And no wonder the navy, thus purged of all its old flavors and juices, has ceased to inflame the imagination of the plain people! Suppose they heard from Hollywood that Fatty Arbuckle had become a hard-shell Baptist and opened a pants-pressing parlor?

§4

Interrogation En Passant.—Is there a college or university in America whose professors of English composition would have given a mark higher than minus one to any of the following writers had they come before them as young, unknown men: George Ade, Ring Lardner, Edgar Lee Masters, James Joyce, Walter Hasenclever? . . .

§5

Further Addenda to the American Credo.—1. That the United States Government has treated the Indians very badly.

2. That a girl's interest in a man is invariably worked up if he is indifferent to her.

3. That Manhattan Island was bought from the Indians by the first settlers for \$24 in cash, a quart of whiskey, and a pair of blue socks.

4. That when a dog wags his tail it signifies that he is extremely happy.

5. That if one eats a large quantity of popcorn and then drinks water, one will burst open.

6. That all the young men from the Argentine who are sojourning in Paris are exceptional dancers and live off wealthy middle-aged married women.

7. That all the guides in Egypt are in cahoots with the shopkeepers and get a share of the loot out of which they help the latter to swindle American tourists.

8. That the more celebrated toreadors in Spain have affairs with all the native society ladies.

9. That a cow, although it hears a railroad train thundering down upon it with bell ringing loudly and whistle blowing frantically, always declines to get off the tracks.

§6

Bucolic in Prose.—The older I grow, the more I find myself drawn toward the country. A cockney born and bred and the offspring of many generations of cockneys, I was in early manhood a bitter derider of rustic scenes, and cherished a theory that true happiness was impossible without paving-stones under it. When I went on a holiday I visited cities; when chance took me into the country I was always vaguely uncomfortable, and stepped very carefully. To this day the smell of a chicken is intensely disagreeable to me and the smell of a cow is still worse, though, since I was much among horses as a boy, I rather like the smell of a horse-stable—a great deal more, in fact, than I like the smell of a nursery, a theatre or a church. But as years accumulate upon me and my kidneys gradually ossify, I begin to find the open country more and more charming. I like to walk in the woods, particularly when it is raining and the trees are solemnly

dripping; I like to stand upon a hillside in spring and look at the young wheat; I like the fragrant mysteries of country brooks and hedge-rows; I am even getting so that I can find a certain elevated amusement in watching a sow and her litter. What is the cause of the change? The chances are that it indicates the first stage of my inevitable breaking up—that when a man passes a certain point, his artificial character, the product of hundreds of years of tradition and race training, begins to slough off, and he returns to the deeper and more natural tastes of primitive man. The great cities that we live in are, after all, quite new in the world. Millions of years before the first of them arose there were dark woods and sunny meadows, and in the woods our hairy ancestors took refuge and across the meadows they chased their game. The world they lived in was lovelier than ours, and much freer. There were no narrow grooves for them to run in, like mice in a cage; they ranged where they would, and felt the soft and friendly earth under them, and knew all its moods. As I slide down the hill I find myself coming into a new kinship with them. Twenty years ago, when I had to go into the country for a week-end, I kept to the house, and devoted myself to drinking Scotch, playing the piano and reading the *New York Evening Journal*. Now I am thinking of buying a farm.

§7

American Advertising. — Specimen phrases and sentences culled at random from advertisements in the current public prints:

1. "Shur-on spectacles and eye-glasses play a large part in charm of personality."
2. "Loss of sleep cost Napoleon his empire. Simmons' Mattresses are built for sleep."
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talk, to dine, to dance, to play—C. and C. Ginger-Ale is the accepted cheer."

5. "After the headlong rush of the day a cup of Ridgways' tea refreshes you like the atmosphere of tranquil calm and cheers you like the glow of the Oriental sun."

§8

Autobiographical Note.—What is my philosophy of life? It is, in simple, merely this: to forget the miseries of the past and remember only its charm, to live the present to the limit of its utmost possibilities, and to view the future as one who has traveled romantically in a colorful far country views the skyline of his nearing homeland—with a sense of great content and slightly sad resignation.

§9

The Monthly Award.—There is some confusion on the part of *Répétition Générale* this month as to the award of the elegant $3\frac{1}{2}$ by $4\frac{3}{4}$ custard pie, bestowed by the department upon the most succulent dose of whiffle made visible during the period in question. Two candidates for the rich prize have appeared upon the scene and the judges have experienced the utmost difficulty in arriving at a decision as to which should receive the *prix*. After mature deliberation they have accordingly decided to declare both equal winners, to cut the pie into two, and to bequeath a half to each.

One half of the pie goes, therefore, to the Cole Motor Car Company of New York, Inc., for its advertisement in the *New York Times*, and the other half to Mr. Henry D. Rissman, president of Cohn, Rissman and Company, Men's Clothiers, of Chicago, for his remarks published in a signed page advertisement entitled "The Modesty of Genius" in the *Chicago Tribune*. The prize-winning feats follow:

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over the edge of a flat world. Two months and nine days later he had discovered the New World, proved his conviction that the world is round, and established one of the most important facts in History.

When Cole conceived and announced the plan to sell Cole Aero-Eights at a net price instead of a list price, it was as revolutionary an idea as was that of Columbus 531 years ago.

II

Eminent authorities tell us that modesty indicates purity or delicacy of thought—a retiring disposition or demeanor—disinclination to presumption, ostentation, or self-assertion. And it has been my observation, that more frequently than otherwise, modesty and genius go hand in hand together.

Under the caption, "America, Here's Our Plan," Mr. George H. Capper, President of the Capper & Capper stores, published in the press of several of the larger cities — an announcement concerning a new order of things in men's clothing, which deserves to rank as a "classic" of commercial literature. Although appearing not in the garb of the conventional advertisement, yet it was the most powerful advertisement I have ever seen.

To me, this advertisement was a masterpiece, not because of its superb physical appearance, or the pure English employed in its construction—but because it fairly reeked with sentiment, idealized commercialism, and practical horse sense; because it promulgated a set of business principles unequalled in the annals of the clothing industry; because it breathed defiance, almost fierce in its seriousness, to conventional merchandising methods, and sounded a clarion call, loud and clear, for *all* to rally round the standard of progress. It was a masterpiece, a gem—but altogether too modest. Mr. Capper hides his light under a bushel—the modesty of genius, if you please.

Being associated with Mr. Capper in this commercial uplift movement—this "heart and soul" effort to raise the standard of the industry in which I am engaged—and chockful of the inspiration I have received from him in our almost daily conferences covering a period of many months—there are certain pertinent facts omitted by Mr. Capper—through innate modesty—which I think the public has the right to know.

One morning Mr. Capper walked quietly and modestly into my office, and jolted me to my heels with this query: "I know you make fine ready-to-wear clothes. Can they be made better?"

And right then he started something. He pricked my vanity, and my fighting blood began to boil. Frankly, I resented the question. "Well, Mr. Capper," I replied, "our firm is one of the few in this country

who has pioneered in the making of fine clothes, and we feel that our clothes are as fine as any produced anywhere in the world—a fact of which we are singularly proud."

Mr. Capper admitted all this, but still insisted—"Can they be made finer?"

I never saw such persistency, such determination in all my life. That disturbing inquiry kept ringing in my ears. "Can they be made finer?" He had a definite thought in his mind—no matter how good, he wanted something better. His plan demanded it. "There is no limit to the fineness of which things may be made," I said. "Our clothes meet the most exacting requirements of the leading retailers of fine clothes in America. If we should produce still finer clothes where would we find a market?"

Like a shot from the cannon's mouth came the answer: "I'll CREATE a market."

My resentment passed. I began thinking. An entirely new situation had arisen. I reflected. Here's a man who thinks as I think, feels as I feel. My idealistic self was much pleased. I saw the possibility of gratifying a smouldering ambition to produce even better clothes—indeed, I had visions of raising the standard of the clothing industry.

Mr. Capper's ringing words, "I'll create a market," gave birth to new ideas and new ideals, and brought about a competitive condition in our entire institution. It rocked our organization from center to circumference, and spurred it on to even higher ideals.

Later Mr. Capper shot another bolt: "Why can't we have all exclusive styles?"

Mr. Capper's logic was convincing, his enthusiasm boundless; he simply would not be denied. And now his dream of raising the standard of the clothing industry—his dream of super-clothes is to become a splendid reality.

Clothing a nation of 110,000,000 people is a real job; and any man who conceives and perfects a plan whereby this vast multitude is bettered or benefited in the matter of dress, renders a service to humanity *equal to that of any genius of modern times.*

As Mr. John S. Capper said, in his now famous "Heart-Throbs, by an Ex-President" published in the daily press upon his retirement from the presidency of that institution—"George H. Capper is a rare type. His equal I have yet to meet in our line of trade. Full to the overflowing in the 'spirit of service'—almost too much so, if that can be; understanding as not *all* men understand, that great successes are made where the thought of money making is forgotten—at least largely so."

I simply wish to add that he is, indeed, an invincible figure in the business world—a blazer of trails—a pioneer in every fibre of his body. I am proud to call him my friend.

§10

Footnote to History.—The most fiery, eloquent and persuasive plea to patriotism, the most impassioned and hypnotic appeal for youth to serve its country in time of war peril, is not one-half so convincing, not one-half so irresistible, not one-half so influential and so successful as a strikingly becoming uniform.

§11

Vox Populi, Vox Dei, II.—The voice of the Lord God Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, as reflected by the people of the United States and their various laws:

36. God believes that Sholom Asch's play, "The God of Vengeance," is very immoral stuff and that the actors who play it should be arrested, tried by a jury, convicted of a criminal offense, and either be fined or locked up in the hoosegow.

37. God believes that if the United States didn't look after South America, South America would go to the dogs.

38. God is against Socialists, but loves all Republicans and Democrats.

39. God is against hoochie-coochie dancing.

40. God is against walking on the grass in public parks.

41. God believes that all bathing beaches should be lighted up with acetylene lamps at night and that policemen should arrest any couple discovered holding hands or kissing.

42. God believes that a teamster whose horse is lazy and won't work and who taps the nag emphatically across the rear in order to make him work should be promptly arrested.

43. God is against prize-fighting.

44. God doesn't believe in betting on the races.

45. God is against masked ball merrymakers wearing their masks on the street on the way to the party, and believes that they should be arrested if they do so.

(To be continued)

§12

Note on Critics.—It is the dodge of a certain type of critic to seek to conceal his own deficiencies—biological, personal, professional and artistic—by attributing them to the person whose work he is criticizing.

§13

Compensation.—The doctrine that the rewards which the world gives to men are not always in accord with their deserts offers a favorite consolation to the great army of the unfit and unsuccessful. Its truth, however, is limited, and within those limits there is actually very little balm for that melancholy legion. It is true that the rewards of the world are often too lavish, but it is seldom true that they are too small. Especially is this the case when one considers the reward of money—the one chiefly thought of by those who find soothing in the doctrine. Everyone knows plenty of men who get more money than they earn—some, indeed, who get a vast deal and earn nothing. But it is enormously difficult to find a man who actually gets *less* than he earns. Claimants to that uncomfortable honor, of course, are numerous—they probably constitute, in fact, the most numerous of all classes of men—, but whenever one examines one of them unsentimentally, forgetting his posture of martyrdom and regarding only his actual produce, one almost invariably finds that it is of little genuine value to other men, and that he himself is a self-deluded and incompetent man.

§14

The Higher Learning in America.—From the *Bulletin* of Flora Macdonald College, Red Springs, N. C., Series V, No. 35:

Col. T. L. Kirkpatrick, apostle of good roads, North Carolina booster extraordinary and president of the Chamber of Commerce,

delivered an eloquent address in the college auditorium November 11th at 11:15, to an audience of college girls, members of the Legion, and citizens. His address was filled with patriotic utterances, beautifully worded and punctuated with humor which caught the audience, but especially did he succeed in selling North Carolina and the South to his hearers. The rapid-fire Tar Heel Colonel, veteran of the Spanish-American War, showed exactly where he stood on the question of the duty of this country to its disabled veterans, and in no uncertain terms paid his respects to the present Congress. He was warmly applauded throughout his speech, and at the close an additional outburst of applause forced him to rise in response. . . .

§ 15

Trademarks.—At the top of the pad of paper on which I am writing this paragraph is a little five-cent tin paper clasp. Engraved on it, in heroic script, I observe, by way of trademark, the word "Defiance."

§ 16

The Row Over Evolution.—A combat between men who believe that they are gorillas and gorillas who believe that they are men.



Medieval

By Bernice L. Kenyon

If you asked me why she is lovely, I should answer:
It is because of the stately way she has of moving,
Making a stir of air that is sweet like the stir of arras—
Taking her lightly-measured steps with a regal bearing.

She is one that you cannot know by the face uplifted,
Nor by a flutter of hands above rich-patterned fabrics;
She is a woman wearing a mask of delicate laughter,
She who is small and bright and calm in the ancient manner.

If you asked me what she has known that a mask conceals her,
Checking the sting of tears and the motion of lips that tremble,
I should say she is sad, and has been sad too often—
Making her proud and strange, who today has tears for no one.

Now there is none would dare disturb the mask she is wearing;
Let her alone—beware of a secret scorn beneath it;
Count it enough that she is lovely and small and slender,
And that the light glows warm, where it falls and clings around her.



The Centurion's Brother

By John McClure

DIODORUS threaded gingerly through the labyrinth of triangles. The lanterns at the corners cast leaping arabesques of light and darkness over the cobblestones. And Diodorus proceeded from stone to stone, shadow to shadow, in that aloofly precise fashion affected by a man who is liquored. The lanterns before and behind capered like goblins. The triangles of light and shade wove shifting patterns beneath his feet. And the great peace of morning lay over Cairo.

Beneath the lantern ahead was a centurion. Diodorus Carnifex was aware of him. He increased his speed. Propelled by invisible power, not evident to himself certainly, for he seemed to be sailing, he proceeded, and the mysterious alleyways of Cairo withdrew as he passed them as if someone were revolving a screen.

The difficulty in avoiding the centurion was not so great, Diodorus imagined, as that in avoiding the cobblestones which by now were rising to meet him. The shadows slid back from beneath his feet, vanishing like scuttling rats up the streets of Cairo. Twenty-four mugs is a long drink, said Diodorus, hedging along the shadowy wall.

"There can be no question about that," said the centurion, turning.

"Pardon me," said Diodorus. "Was I speaking aloud?"

"You were singing, or I am an acorn," said the centurion.

"I must be off," said Diodorus, standing upon one foot.

"It is well after midnight," said the centurion, "and damned revolutionary

Egyptians are not allowed on the streets. Do you know where you are?"

"I wish," said Diodorus Carnifex, "that I could assert I was home in my bed, but I cannot compete with the greatest acrobat among the saints, who was on two vessels at once. I have been at the barber's. That was when the evening was early. He had a jar as big as your belly full of Falnernian wine. There was a young fellow there had a harp in his hand, and was singing 'The Jeweler's Wife.' And between the three of us we made a night of it not to be sniffed at. I am on my way home."

One of the great rats of Cairo dashed whisking across the street, an apparition like an inferior devil.

"Wherever you were," said the centurion, "this is no hour for prowling."

"I am the last person to deny it," said Diodorus, eyeing the vanishing rat, "though I did not hear what you said. Did you glimpse that animal? It was an omen. That rat was peculiar. I must be off."

"Your legs are unstable," said the centurion.

"I confess it," said Diodorus. "I hope the merchant that sold me this amethyst ring will suffer in hell; for I gave him silver enough to keep his family in sandals to pay for this pebble as an amulet against drunkenness. Consider me now. If it is a preservative against intoxication——"

"You would as well be wearing a soapstone," the centurion admitted.

"I have been on the high seas for an hour," said Diodorus, "and though my mind is as clear as the Kabala, I have lost all sense of the compass."

"And how will you make your way home?" said the centurion.

"It is not likely I shall ride there upon a broomstick," said Diodorus, "and with my feet so far away and the pavement so illusory, I am not certain I shall get there at all. If you will attend me——"

"The bilboes is your destination according to law," said the centurion. "I am under an oath to detain you."

"If you will come with me as a friend," said Diodorus Carnifex, "arm in arm, I will take up with you when we reach home the problem of who invented pockets. In my blue cloak which is hanging upon the peg between the bath and the kitchen I boast one of those contraptions. When I left home, there was a wallet in it."

"If I did not attend you," said the centurion after a revery, "you would fall in the gutter beyond any question."

"Nothing ever happens on the dog-watch," said Diodorus. "The corporal of the guard is unlikely to look for you. And as I said there was a wallet in it. If you will come home with me, leaning under my shoulder, we will have a discussion, drinking Greek beer."

The shadows enshrouded two forms as they receded down a street of Cairo.

"I feared we would never arrive," said the centurion, once they were on the inside.

"It was heavy sailing certainly," said Diodorus Carnifex. "That is the blue cloak hanging upon the peg, as I told you. If you will feel in the pocket you will discover the purse. You will excuse me if I sit on the couch here until I get relief of some sort from this centripetal motion."

The centurion did as he was bid. He stood in the midst of the floor and counted the pieces of silver.

"The beer is in the jar," said Diodorus Carnifex, fanning. "The jar is in the larder."

"Give me brandy or spirits," said the centurion. "I have a superstitious aversion to water bewitched."

"The rum is in the bottles," said Diodorus Carnifex. "The wine is in

the barrel. You are at home here. Shift for yourself."

The centurion soon made a sound of swallowing. Diodorus Carnifex lit the candles, and the moonlight in the chamber gave place to a yellow glow.

"You have an establishment like my brother's in Antioch," said the centurion, as Diodorus returned obliquely to the couch. "He had three rooms and a kitchen."

"He was a soldier?" said Diodorus.

"He was an adventurer," said the centurion. "He was not the sort of man who would be content in the army."

"From the beginning he was more restless than I was. We were born in Alexandria and my father was a sign-painter and my mother a barmaid. Yet Dennis when he was still in a breech-cloth began to believe that he was descended from the Pharaohs. It served no purpose to point to our parents, both of whom were of Roman extraction, as you can divine from my nose, because then he said that he was a reincarnation."

"He grew up with the vainest intentions. Whether his desire was for leadership and competitive splendor or for absolute glory, I am not certain."

"The latter is finer," said Diodorus Carnifex. "In competition with geese any duck can acquire a factitious distinction. But absolute honor which is not relative and is not determined merely by the inferiority of the environment, but is a blossom of individual growth, that honor partakes of the celestial, and is worthy of the ambition of a true man."

"Your arguments are as clear as claret," said the centurion, "which is to say, are a little colored with grape. But my brother hankered for some sort of glory. Though he was illiterate, he spoke of becoming a doctor, and argued heatedly with the gymnosophists when they came to town to buy vegetables. Politics attracted him early. However, he had a practical turn, and when he was disappointed in his ambition to become a magistrate, he took up tailoring."

"After some time, when he was unable to collect from his patrons in order

to pay off his creditors—he had purchased a devil of a lot of wool on faith—he proposed a law to abolish debts, and led a street insurrection. How he escaped from the city after the rioting I was never informed, but he did so, and was not among those who were hanged.”

“I had considered an insurrection against Rome,” said Diodorus Carnifex, “and have visualized a black flag above the barricades, and myself waving it. I am glad you told me of this campaign.”

“They are never successful,” said the centurion, “except when the state is already so rotten that they are unnecessary.”

“You should qualify that,” said Diodorus. “In politics nothing is axiomatic.”

“They seldom succeed, then,” said the centurion. “After this disaster my brother entered the Ethiopian trade, transporting ivory. He earned a great deal of money, but he lost it at Byzantium guessing the speed of Arabian horses. He then proceeded to Antioch.

“And it was there that he set up housekeeping in just such a place as this is, three rooms and a kitchen, with reasonable rent. He was living with a dressmaker who was ravishingly beautiful. That she betrayed him is hard to conceive, because he is a fine figure of a Roman, much like myself, witty and amiable, but she seems to have done so. The intruder was a banker, far enough advanced in years to have been an archbishop, but a man of the world. The dressmaker, who had earned all the money in my brother’s establishment, seemed to be charmed by the prospect of not having to work, or so I explain it. And my brother, who loved her devotedly and needed the funds, became immediately incensed at women. When his effort to annihilate himself was thwarted, his fury approached the extreme.

“For he attempted suicide, of course. He put his affairs in order, which was not very difficult. He wrote the customary farewell to the world. He prepared a goblet of hemlock. Then, because he had joined the Nazarenes, he sent for the priest. And he was on the very verge of drinking when the monk unkindly informed him that if he swallowed it he must submerge unshrived, and that it was unpardonable and an affront to the church to have summoned a monk for such irregular rites.

“So my brother departed from Antioch by night in order that nobody should see him, very bitter against the banker and furious at dressmakers. I have heard from him only indirectly in recent years,” said the centurion. “From Antioch he went East, and I hear that he acquired considerable honor in Turkey burying women alive.”

“His industry is admirable though its object unworthy,” said Diodorus Carnifex. “What an exceptional history. Is your own so unusual?”

“Nothing ever has happened to me,” said the centurion. “I entered the army at the age of eighteen, and they are still only talking of war.”

There was a measured clatter of hobnail sandals in the street without, breaking the deep peace of Cairo.

“What the devil is that?” cried Diodorus Carnifex.

“It is the third relief,” said the centurion bitterly. “I must gallop eight squares, full of this brandy, and be at the corner of the market by seven minutes past three. Otherwise it is the guardhouse. The corporal’s orders are drastic. I am taking the money.”

“The gods go with you,” said Diodorus Carnifex.

The centurion bolted. There was a clatter of his steps outside, but before he had stumbled over the curb and into the street, Diodorus Carnifex, the moon by now on his face, heard only the sounds of sleep.



Still Life

By Amanda Benjamin Hall

HUMOR was her bubble,
But pricked by any pin:
Every storm of trouble
Drenched her to the skin!

Many lived to flout her,
Uncles and aunts,
Springing up about her,
Regarding her askance,

With tongues upon the scandal
Of how her mind was sick;
Who called the sun a candle
And claimed she trimmed the wick.

Her fancy was the fleetest
Of anything that cruised,
In sorrow always sweetest
Like flowers that are bruised.

But laughter made her nimble,
And wisdom kept her shy;
She would not wear a thimble
And thread the needle's eye.

While others washed the dishes
The live-long afternoon,
With apron full of wishes,
She waited for the moon,

Knowing no lover, only
Strange heroes of delight. . . .
If sometimes she was lonely
She kissed herself good night.



THE greatest phenomenon the world will ever see will be the man who can
imagine what his wife thinks of him.



Carver W. Ravenshaw

By L. M. Hussey

I

NOW that Carver W. Ravenshaw is dead and has become, I suppose, a fascinating ornament among the shades, nothing restrains me from divulging his secret. A secret? Indeed, it is scarcely that any longer, for that strange and moving scene at his bier, that melancholy spectacle of uxorial grief, is known to all. But it has been falsely interpreted, it has been employed to traduce his memory.

To me the memory of Ravenshaw compels more charm than any other recollection of the memorable dead. The man was an embodiment of romance. From his own chronic exhilaration he evoked in his companions moods of singular exaltation. One left him intoxicated and aroused. And I used to laugh at his faults. They were the complements of his charm.

The detractors of Carver W. Ravenshaw base their uncharitable case upon his marital relations. That Ravenshaw was also a drinking man, that he was dissolute, that he was a spendthrift, that his debts were never paid, that he was perpetually in the hands of the usurers—these other delinquencies of the man form but a sombre background to what has been deemed his major vice. But I now hasten to deny that the secret revealed at my friend's obsequies was in any way vicious. Instead it showed Ravenshaw as one whose life had borne the hidden impress of a surprising moral resolution. He had, I say, a strong and laudable ethical bias.

When I think of all the harsh things that have been said about Ravenshaw I

recall to mind a touching little scene in my apartment only a few months ago. I was giving a little dinner, a sort of memorial to my friend, and I had as my guests the three persons closest to Ravenshaw, three ladies, no one of them very young. Upon the face of each there was the impress of a subdued but indubitable melancholy. It was delightful to me to observe that they were friends and that we could all meet together generously to speak of the departed.

Fundamentally, the occasion was a bit solemn. Only to the vulgar could it seem amusing. But we all managed to laugh a little, for I told some tales of Ravenshaw and repeated some of his words and they were, as ever, provocative of mirth. Then, for a while, the talk turned to foreign matters and touched listlessly upon this and that topic. It was plain, however, where the real thoughts of my three guests dwelt. Finally they grew silent and I observed them glancing covertly one at the other with little touches of smothered speculation in the eyes. That curiosity was quite natural, but it distressed me. I did not wish their thoughts to turn from generous recollections to mutual disparagement. I arose and brought to the table a bottle from which I filled four little liqueur glasses. I stood at my place and I said:

"The wonderful thing about Carver W. Ravenshaw was the wealth of his personality. His gifts in charm were so abounding that we've all had from him something separate and unique. Our memories are distinctly our own. Isn't it true that he was a separate individual to each of us? He had more

than one life, and to every one of you he gave fully one of his existences. But here's to the common memories of all! Here's to the man as we all knew him!"

The response to my words was very touching. I think the tears shed then should forever free Ravenshaw from contumelious remembrance. Certainly if he was understood and absolved by those who stood closest to his life, no harsh judgment should be passed by remoter persons. Since that dinner I have seen my guests separately several times. I have not, however, committed the possible indiscretion of bringing them all together again. After all, they are women and possessed of natural feminine prejudices. One could not expect the impossible from them.

I must proceed now to tell how I came to learn Ravenshaw's delicately guarded secret. His revelation of it was inadvertent. It was due to Hermoso's green poison.

II

ONE evening, in the autumn of our first year of war, Ravenshaw became excessively intoxicated on a greenish firewater served by Hermoso at his Spanish restaurant. Hermoso had a name for that special beverage, an Indian name derived from the natives of Honduras, that I have forgotten. The stuff was nothing more than an alcoholic infusion of some villainous Central American weed, colored green by the natural chlorophyll of the plant.

Hermoso had good wines and good liquors and, in those days, a very fair beer, but Ravenshaw was invariably attracted by the exotic. When I came in he was seated at the usual corner table, under that ominous design of bare machetes nailed by their hilts to the wall, and old Hermoso, like a fat pirate, was standing at his side. Those at the other tables were listening to Ravenshaw's talk.

A few details upon the man as he then appeared will suffice to recall his physical semblance.

He wore, as always, an old felt hat

that by long association with the wearer had achieved an almost sentient expressiveness. That hat was like a face, an ancient face, grooved, lined, eroded by the passage of years. Its stains and indentations bespoke its experiences. Infinitely villainous and aggressive when pulled down over Ravenshaw's eyes, it became rakishly bland and genial when tilted back from his forehead. Over the battered surface of its felt there were the many cicatrices of wounding adventure. It was a hat, one perceived, that had rolled in gutters, that had served as a pillow for its master, that had been worn on discreditable enterprises, that had lent its mute presence to many a boistrous hour. As hats go, it had attained to an enfeebled immortality. Ravenshaw had made it as much a part of him as his flesh.

Beneath the hat was the memorable face. The dividing saliency of a long nose, flexuous at the nostrils, was flanked by the lesser promontories of the cheekbones, over which the taut skin was ceaselessly enlivened by a surprising ebb and flow of delicate color. Ravenshaw's eyes, set at a moderate distance from his nose, had a chameleon-like virtuosity of tint. Their prevailing shade was dark, intermingled with brown and black, but this basic color-scheme was susceptible of unusual variations. In moments of candor, or when his dreaming moods came upon the man, the eyes lightened until you might have deemed them a deeper sort of blue. When Ravenshaw was angered, luteous fires coruscated in their depths like the lights thrown back from the facets of a dusky gem. And they were at other times veiled, leaden, opaque.

His chin was somewhat square, the least mobile of his features. No matter how scrupulously shaven, it glistened with a bluish gloss. In contrast to his chin the lips were extremely mobile. Being thin, they could compress themselves to a straight line of savage intensity, or relax to a wide and most provocative smile. When the upper lip curved it achieved the expression of an

exquisitely chiseled contempt. The flexibility of those lips was the secret of Ravenshaw's fastidious enunciation. Words fell from them like polished ornaments of speech. Every syllable was given its value and, strange to say, inebriation never deprived my friend of his labial precision.

Seen entire, the man had a gaunt appearance. His frame was long and narrow. But he was justly proportioned; there was no likeness to the rangy backwoodsman with dangling arms and disproportionate shanks. His stride was nervous, yet rhythmic. Walking or sitting, his hands were constantly active. They moved about in gesticulation or they made small, mute movements that were complementary to his unspoken thoughts.

That evening, when I entered Hermoso's place, it was plain that Ravenshaw had swallowed more than a legitimate portion of the Hispano-American's poisonous green fire-water. He had come to that point where he must command an audience. Like the Ancient Mariner, he had a power in his eye at such moments. Old Hermoso stood at his table as if under the spell of that domination. When Ravenshaw espied me he made a beckoning gesture with his head, but he spoke no greeting. I sat down at the table and he continued to address Hermoso, a huge, beastly man like a hogshead on legs.

"Señor botiquinero," said Ravenshaw in his most punctilious way, "say what you will, it is I, not you, who should be paid for drinking such stuff as this. You know perfectly well that this is a dank, green poison. It holds the blood of man in great enmity. But don't misunderstand me; I admire you for selling it. I believe, Señor, that in demanding money for this perfectly worthless article you are showing a business instinct that will shortly lead you to wealth. I take it that nothing of any real value is ever salable. It's contrary to human nature to pay for a worthy thing. We expect that in life as a gift."

This speech was a preamble to one of his favorite topics—the subject of

wealth. He held wealth in reverence. He declared that "the wealthy man himself is nobody. He might be you or I. Don't worship him, show him no courtesy, save as the visible symbol of money. When your thoughts turn to him, let them think not of his face or anything he may say, but simply of fluent pieces of gold. It is the money that makes the man."

I hold in memory so many fragments of Ravenshaw's discourses—fantasies with much acute and sensible observation concealed like a fruity kernel within their complex investiture of words—that it is impossible to reproduce all that he said on this particular evening, and for my purpose, needless. His talk then was typical of the man in his oracular moments, an engaging blend of extravagance and sense. I remember how, shortly after I arrived, Ravenshaw solemnly set a silver dollar to spinning on the table-top and then demonstrated how, by a progressive multiplication of that monetary symbol, he might elevate himself to any degree of human eminence. I listened, charmed as I always was by the man's fancy, but finding this evening no different from many others spent in his company. I did not realize at the moment that I was shortly to be vouchsafed some intimate contacts with his affairs.

For it must be pointed out that I, like his other friends, knew Ravenshaw's life only in fragments. He was fond of relating his adventures, but three-fourths of his recitals were composed of fancy and the remaining fourth of possible truth was distorted by its romantic associations. There was little of the substance of everyday life in his confidences. One never captured the picture of a rational human being, sleeping in a bed, eating his three daily meals, enduring common perplexities and so forth. For example, Ravenshaw represented himself as a man of strong amorous proclivities, but no one had ever seen him with a woman. Later I was to learn, with astonishment, of his adherence to a strict morality in his relations with the other sex. He must

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When I think of all the harsh things that have been said about Ravenshaw I

recall to mind a touching little scene in my apartment only a few months ago. I was giving a little dinner, a sort of memorial to my friend, and I had as my guests the three persons closest to Ravenshaw, three ladies, no one of them very young. Upon the face of each there was the impress of a subdued but indubitable melancholy. It was delightful to me to observe that they were friends and that we could all meet together generously to speak of the departed.

Fundamentally, the occasion was a bit solemn. Only to the vulgar could it seem amusing. But we all managed to laugh a little, for I told some tales of Ravenshaw and repeated some of his words and they were, as ever, provocative of mirth. Then, for a while, the talk turned to foreign matters and touched listlessly upon this and that topic. It was plain, however, where the real thoughts of my three guests dwelt. Finally they grew silent and I observed them glancing covertly one at the other with little touches of smothered speculation in the eyes. That curiosity was quite natural, but it distressed me. I did not wish their thoughts to turn from generous recollections to mutual disparagement. I arose and brought to the table a bottle from which I filled four little liqueur glasses. I stood at my place and I said:

"The wonderful thing about Carver W. Ravenshaw was the wealth of his personality. His gifts in charm were so abounding that we've all had from him something separate and unique. Our memories are distinctly our own. Isn't it true that he was a separate individual to each of us? He had more

than one life, and to every one of you he gave fully one of his existences. But here's to the common memories of all! Here's to the man as we all knew him!"

The response to my words was very touching. I think the tears shed then should forever free Ravenshaw from contumelious remembrance. Certainly if he was understood and absolved by those who stood closest to his life, no harsh judgment should be passed by remoter persons. Since that dinner I have seen my guests separately several times. I have not, however, committed the possible indiscretion of bringing them all together again. After all, they are women and possessed of natural feminine prejudices. One could not expect the impossible from them.

I must proceed now to tell how I came to learn Ravenshaw's delicately guarded secret. His revelation of it was inadvertent. It was due to Hermoso's green poison.

II

ONE evening, in the autumn of our first year of war, Ravenshaw became excessively intoxicated on a greenish firewater served by Hermoso at his Spanish restaurant. Hermoso had a name for that special beverage, an Indian name derived from the natives of Honduras, that I have forgotten. The stuff was nothing more than an alcoholic infusion of some villainous Central American weed, colored green by the natural chlorophyll of the plant.

Hermoso had good wines and good liquors and, in those days, a very fair beer, but Ravenshaw was invariably attracted by the exotic. When I came in he was seated at the usual corner table, under that ominous design of bare machetes nailed by their hilts to the wall, and old Hermoso, like a fat pirate, was standing at his side. Those at the other tables were listening to Ravenshaw's talk.

A few details upon the man as he then appeared will suffice to recall his physical semblance.

He wore, as always, an old felt hat

that by long association with the wearer had achieved an almost sentient expressiveness. That hat was like a face, an ancient face, grooved, lined, eroded by the passage of years. Its stains and indentations bespoke its experiences. Infinitely villainous and aggressive when pulled down over Ravenshaw's eyes, it became rakishly bland and genial when tilted back from his forehead. Over the battered surface of its felt there were the many cicatrices of wounding adventure. It was a hat, one perceived, that had rolled in gutters, that had served as a pillow for its master, that had been worn on discreditable enterprises, that had lent its mute presence to many a boistrous hour. As hats go, it had attained to an enfeebled immortality. Ravenshaw had made it as much a part of him as his flesh.

Beneath the hat was the memorable face. The dividing saliency of a long nose, flexuous at the nostrils, was flanked by the lesser promontories of the cheekbones, over which the taut skin was ceaselessly enlivened by a surprising ebb and flow of delicate color. Ravenshaw's eyes, set at a moderate distance from his nose, had a chameleon-like virtuosity of tint. Their prevailing shade was dark, intermingled with brown and black, but this basic color-scheme was susceptible of unusual variations. In moments of candor, or when his dreaming moods came upon the man, the eyes lightened until you might have deemed them a deeper sort of blue. When Ravenshaw was angered, luteous fires coruscated in their depths like the lights thrown back from the facets of a dusky gem. And they were at other times veiled, leaden, opaque.

His chin was somewhat square, the least mobile of his features. No matter how scrupulously shaven, it glistened with a bluish gloss. In contrast to his chin the lips were extremely mobile. Being thin, they could compress themselves to a straight line of savage intensity, or relax to a wide and most provocative smile. When the upper lip curved it achieved the expression of an

exquisitely chiseled contempt. The flexibility of those lips was the secret of Ravenshaw's fastidious enunciation. Words fell from them like polished ornaments of speech. Every syllable was given its value and, strange to say, inebriation never deprived my friend of his labial precision.

Seen entire, the man had a gaunt appearance. His frame was long and narrow. But he was justly proportioned; there was no likeness to the rangy backwoodsman with dangling arms and disproportionate shanks. His stride was nervous, yet rhythmic. Walking or sitting, his hands were constantly active. They moved about in gesticulation or they made small, mute movements that were complementary to his unspoken thoughts.

That evening, when I entered Hermoso's place, it was plain that Ravenshaw had swallowed more than a legitimate portion of the Hispano-American's poisonous green fire-water. He had come to that point where he must command an audience. Like the Ancient Mariner, he had a power in his eye at such moments. Old Hermoso stood at his table as if under the spell of that domination. When Ravenshaw espied me he made a beckoning gesture with his head, but he spoke no greeting. I sat down at the table and he continued to address Hermoso, a huge, beastly man like a hogshead on legs.

"Señor botiquinero," said Ravenshaw in his most punctilious way, "say what you will, it is I, not you, who should be paid for drinking such stuff as this. You know perfectly well that this is a dank, green poison. It holds the blood of man in great enmity. But don't misunderstand me; I admire you for selling it. I believe, Señor, that in demanding money for this perfectly worthless article you are showing a business instinct that will shortly lead you to wealth. I take it that nothing of any real value is ever salable. It's contrary to human nature to pay for a worthy thing. We expect that in life as a gift."

This speech was a preamble to one of his favorite topics—the subject of

wealth. He held wealth in reverence. He declared that "the wealthy man himself is nobody. He might be you or I. Don't worship him, show him no courtesy, save as the visible symbol of money. When your thoughts turn to him, let them think not of his face or anything he may say, but simply of fluent pieces of gold. It is the money that makes the man."

I hold in memory so many fragments of Ravenshaw's discourses—fantasies with much acute and sensible observation concealed like a fruity kernel within their complex investiture of words—that it is impossible to reproduce all that he said on this particular evening, and for my purpose, needless. His talk then was typical of the man in his oracular moments, an engaging blend of extravagance and sense. I remember how, shortly after I arrived, Ravenshaw solemnly set a silver dollar to spinning on the table-top and then demonstrated how, by a progressive multiplication of that monetary symbol, he might elevate himself to any degree of human eminence. I listened, charmed as I always was by the man's fancy, but finding this evening no different from many others spent in his company. I did not realize at the moment that I was shortly to be vouchsafed some intimate contacts with his affairs.

For it must be pointed out that I, like his other friends, knew Ravenshaw's life only in fragments. He was fond of relating his adventures, but three-fourths of his recitals were composed of fancy and the remaining fourth of possible truth was distorted by its romantic associations. There was little of the substance of everyday life in his confidences. One never captured the picture of a rational human being, sleeping in a bed, eating his three daily meals, enduring common perplexities and so forth. For example, Ravenshaw represented himself as a man of strong amorous proclivities, but no one had ever seen him with a woman. Later I was to learn, with astonishment, of his adherence to a strict morality in his relations with the other sex. He must

have been born with that moral bias and have been, intellectually, a bit ashamed of it. Else I cannot explain why he was so secretive about his family.

An hour after my arrival in Hermoso's place that evening, Ravenshaw, whose speech had shown no diminution, abruptly paused in the utterance of a florid sentence and, with a look something akin to fright upon his face, suddenly arose from the table. Glancing up at him in surprise, I saw that his lips were compressed until nothing but a tenuous red line marked their juncture. The flexuous nostrils seemed pinched and every bit of color had left his cheeks. Inadvertently I turned my head in order to follow the direction of his eyes. It seemed plain that someone had entered the restaurant, that he had seen something to disturb, even to frighten him. But there was no one near the door and watching Ravenshaw, no one at the tables moved.

Stiffly, in a manner quite unlike his usual rhythmic progression, Ravenshaw moved toward the door. He pulled upon the knob blunderingly and by an abrupt projection of his gaunt figure disappeared into the night. At one of the tables someone laughed, and the laugh spread through all the company. But to me there was something ominous in Ravenshaw's departure, and after another moment I arose and followed him to the street.

Heaven knows what I expected to find outdoors. Of course, in that unsavory neighborhood, to which I came only on the chance of meeting with Ravenshaw, almost any violent thing might happen. And Ravenshaw, through my chance contacts with him, had woven about his person such a fantastic fabric of dark romance that I believe it would have given me no surprise had I discovered him, at that moment, in some dreadful struggle with God knows what obscure antagonists.

What I actually saw, emerging to the street, bore no likeness to my inflamed fancy. It was a ludicrous declension from the desperate picture of my imagi-

nation. For the street was empty save for the solitary figure of my friend. He had crossed the pavement to the curb and there he sat, his sharp elbows pressed into his knees, his face cupped in his long-fingered hands. I stared at him an instant and then touched him on the shoulder.

I spoke and without raising his face Ravenshaw murmured some inarticulate words. Hearing this blur of indistinguishable syllables from one who commonly spoke with such exactness, my mind was flooded with comic understanding. I began to laugh, but Ravenshaw paid no attention to my mirth. In fact the man was in an extreme condition of muzzy distress. Impelled by a sudden urge, he had fled ignominiously from Hermoso's green poison. The toxic stuff had reduced him to abrupt imbecility. In plain words, Ravenshaw was drunk.

It's a compassionate act to find some helpless, tipsy fellow and to help him, pulling and hauling, to some haven of rest and security. There's laudable pity and humanity in that act. I never could understand why, in the minds of disinterested bystanders, such a spectacle invariably provokes a laugh; I never could see why the mirthful aspect of it completely obliterates the praiseworthy, the touching gesture of compassion. Certain impressions from my childhood have probably left me, in this matter, with an unique viewpoint, so that I seldom smile at the generous man lugging a drunkard through the streets. When I was quite small my family underwent a temporary decline of fortunes and we were forced to live on a side street peopled with the families of clerks and such like poor, middle-class folks, all of them struggling to appear very refined and respectable and suffering many pitiful, if ludicrous, lapses from their ideal.

It was the women of Van Pelt Street who sustained, with great inflexibility, the coveted traditions, the struggle for respectability. I recall them, mainly, as somewhat thin, stringy, sharp-tongued creatures who had long out-

lived whatever evanescent charms they had possessed in their youth. The husbands, as I have said, were clerks—small, mild-spoken men whose piteous timidity in the presence of their wives was apparent even to me, a little boy.

Now, at the corner of Van Pelt Street Gus Elwanger conducted a bar-room. And that bar-room was the place of periodic escape for nearly all those poor, joyless men. They used to go there, to be greeted by Gus with a heartening hail, and fill themselves with cheap beer. The beer fuddled them and many a Saturday night I have seen a laden *paterfamilias* staggering on the compassionate arm of a friend, led, by that kindness, to his own doorstep. A thin, outraged and agile wife would emerge and bundle the unfortunate indoors. Back to the prison house! I, as a small boy, used to sigh. Instinctively I pitied those clerks and disliked their wives. Today my sympathies might even extend to the women. Assuredly, life never brought them much. Their dearest ambition was ceaselessly thwarted by the proximity of Gus Elwanger's hospitable khan. They had but a single luxury—the habit of keeping pug dogs. That was a local proclivity. Every family had a pug dog. Usually the dogs were incarcerated, of nights, in the cellars. You could see their gloomy faces peering out from the cellar windows like purgatorial spirits in melancholious waiting for a release. Periodically Van Pelt Street was invaded by lynx-eyed Italians, with ambiguous sacks thrown across their shoulders. With iron-shod sticks these foreigners used to search the grass plots in front of the houses for the bones hoarded by the dogs.

But I have forgotten Ravenshaw. I found him helpless on the curb outside Hermoso's restaurant. He said that he wanted to go home. Home! I had never associated such a conventionality with the man! Nor had he ever, in his more assured moments, admitted any connection with the hearth. I took him, so to speak, off guard. He murmured an address. And with great curiosity

on my part we began a tortuous journey through the streets.

III

WHEN I knocked at the door of the flat in Spruce Street a woman opened it and in some embarrassment I entered, dragging Ravenshaw by the arm. Indoors he suffered a further collapse. He became limp, as if all his bones had slipped away from their articulations. More than that, the osseous frame itself seemed to dissolve and to become a part of the wilted flesh. The woman, whom I had not yet had a chance to observe, helped me to carry Ravenshaw to the bedroom, and we stretched him out. He was already asleep.

I followed the woman back to the living-room. It was a neat chamber, clean and conventional. She walked to the center-table and stood within the circle of yellow light cast by an electric lamp that was covered with a shade of canary-colored silk. Then I saw that she was plump and fair-skinned—a bit matronly and a bit girlish at the same time. Her face was pretty—a comeliness derived from a white skin, delicately tinted, a fluffed mass of yellow hair and a pair of appealing blue eyes. It was a gentle face, but there was a touch of sensuous ardor about the scarlet lips.

"I'm obliged to you," she murmured. "I'm thankful to you. . . ."

Again I was embarrassed. I scarcely knew what to say. Ravenshaw's enigmatic relationship to this woman perplexed me. I was astonished to think of him received into such a neat, conventional place.

Perhaps from my facial expression she divined my perplexity.

"I'm his wife," she said.

It was incredible, and yet impossible to doubt her. Plainly she was sincere. Vulgar deception was impossible to such a woman. Ravenshaw, the raconteur, the bon-vivant, the participant in a thousand dubious adventures, the man who seemed divorced from all earthly ties, living like some gaudy insect a life of

strange freedoms, was obviously at the same time a legally wedded man. He had a wife, he had a home and, as I discovered later, he was the father of children.

Plainly then I had, through his misadventure with Hermoso's green poison, discovered a very jealously guarded secret. Never in his most fluent moments of self-exposition, of seemingly unreserved confidence, had Ravenshaw mentioned a wife to any of us. He must have found in his matrimonial relations a condition obscurely shameful. In becoming a married man he had, it seemed, yielded to a congenital urge, a laudable moral instinct that was a part of his fiber, that was a heritage from I know not what strict ancestry. But to the world he was profoundly ashamed to reveal any such decline from his engaging posture of moral emancipation. Ah, Ravenshaw, you could not escape the dead hand, old fellow, and back of all your fine, libertarian postures there was the strange rigidity of a concealed ethic!

I remember very well that evening when I sat and talked with Ravenshaw's blonde little wife. The canary lampshade gave to her face a sweet transparency. She asked me how long I had known Ravenshaw, and then we fell to talking of him. She was in a mood to confess some of her perplexities, and plainly they were numerous. Ravenshaw's secret morality had carried him to the altar, but it was powerless to conduct him farther. Mrs. Ravenshaw made the piteous confession that in the beginning she had striven to "reform" him. At that admission I could not restrain a smile. Poor little woman, she had desired the sort of husband that all women seem to desire—a safe man, a devitalized man, an obedient, home-loving, hearth-fostering man. Women, it appears to me, shrink from all that is unique and individual in men, and if the good Lord God would only stamp out His male creatures in accordance with a single, staid pattern, the dear ladies would, I think, be vastly pleased.

Here, then, was this little fair-haired creature endeavoring at first to cage that bright-plumaged bird within the bars of her conventional desire. But Ravenshaw was not amenable.

"At first he nearly broke my heart," she said.

He would disappear, and he still disappears, for weeks at a time. He was given to shocking assertions of his inalienable freedom.

"He drinks—terribly," she said.

"I know that," I answered.

"And he's always in trouble about money."

"I imagine so."

And then, after a pause, I said:

"But you do not leave him!"

I can recall with great clarity the curious expression that possessed her face as I spoke these words. Those scarlet lips—I have mentioned that there was something ardorous about them—seemed to grow taut and to tremble with a complex emotion that was incongruous to that fair, candid face. Not in the blue eyes, nowhere in the face, save upon those red, mobile lips, was revealed an emotion that was intense and almost ferine. Thus I became aware of another secret—the secret of Ravenshaw's wife. If she could she would have made a safe husband of her man, but failing in that she had yielded herself to something more primitive. I firmly believe that she found in Ravenshaw, in his wild vagaries, in his sudden passions, the satisfaction of a hidden ardor, an inherent streak of wildness of which the fantastic vices of Ravenshaw were evocative. When she told me that she would never leave him I knew that she spoke a profound truth. I don't know what Ravenshaw may have called out in those other women, whom I must presently mention, but in this one, the little, gentle blonde, he had recalled long-buried ancestral moods, obscure passions of a remote age; and there she was before me, bathed in the yellow light, a being of sweet timidities, a garden blossom strangely tintured with the obscure essence of the wild flower!

We were distracted from our conversation by a call from the other room. It was Ravenshaw's voice, and we hurried to his bedside. When he saw me he stared in utter amazement.

"What are you doing here?" he exclaimed.

And then, propping himself upon an elbow, he cried out with great vehemence:

"Get out of here! What the devil! Get out of here!"

IV

To be expelled so unceremoniously from the home of a man who was of all things punctilious in his intercourse with his friends was vastly surprising. At the time I explained his rudeness as the ungovernable whimsy of a drunken man. But that was an explanation that did not quite suffice. I remembered his face, and the anger in his eyes was not the boozy choler of the inebriate. It was, I became convinced, the expression of a very clear-headed exasperation. Carver W. Ravenshaw was for the moment sober when he ordered me from his house.

Much cogitation, and a critical survey of the subsequent events, have persuaded me that when Ravenshaw saw me standing at his bedside, in the presence of his wife, he was momentarily deprived of his aplomb. He lost that suavity and that facile ability to cope with the most diverse circumstances which were usually common to the man. He was surprised into an intemperate explosion of feeling. In other words, I had discovered his secret, I had come upon that which he had taken pains to hide. I never realized, until later, how particularly Ravenshaw desired that no one should guess his conventional yieldings.

When I saw him next he seemed a bit surly, and this was a strange mood for him. He talked little, and I detected him in suspicious glances at my face. He was not only a trifle sullen, but he seemed to brood. For the first time in all our contacts Ravenshaw irri-

tated me. His stand, his attitude was absurd. Did I think I found him any the less charming or interesting because I knew him to be a married man? I was not, at that time, in full sympathy with the man's curious psychology. Frankly, I didn't understand him.

After that meeting it was a long time before I saw him again. A strange thing happened in the interim that led me to a fuller comprehension of that sensitive shrinking hitherto unguessed in Ravenshaw. For not only did he disappear from all his familiar haunts, from Hermoso's, from Moon's, from his attendance at the symphony concerts, but from his home as well. I was not aware that he had abandoned his home until Mrs. Ravenshaw searched me out and revealed the fact.

She came to me at my apartment. She had been weeping, and the effect of her tears was to give her an appearance of fragility. Ravenshaw was gone, she said. Could I do anything? Did I know where he was?

"How do you know he's gone?" I asked. "I mean, permanently? Hasn't he disappeared hundreds of times in the past?"

"Oh, yes, but this is different. Half the time I don't know where he is, where he stays or sleeps, but this is really different. He wrote me a letter. . . ."

She took the crumpled note out of her purse and permitted me to read it. It was laconic—and cruel. There was neither salutation nor signature. Slantwise across the page, in Ravenshaw's delicate scrawl, were written these words:

"I am never coming back any more. You can do what you please about this."

I recall how, in the artificial twilight of my study, I talked with Ravenshaw's blonde wife about her problem. I endeavored to give her an optimistic viewpoint, but the more I dilated upon Ravenshaw's vagaries, the more deep became her conviction that he had at last committed himself to a finality.

"You don't understand," she said.

"Well, what is it I'm to understand?" I asked with some asperity.

She was silent.

When we parted I took her hand.

"Go home and put yourself at ease," I told her. "I'm sure to run across Ravenshaw almost any day. And I'll get word to you at once."

At the door she turned, and I was surprised to see a glow of pride suffuse her pale face.

"I don't want you to believe for a moment that Carver is a bad man!" she exclaimed.

V

WHEN I came upon Ravenshaw he was seated on a bench in Rittenhouse Square. We caught sight of each other simultaneously and, instead of the expected scowl, his face beamed at once with a cordial smile. He arose and offered me a place beside him with the politeness of a most genial host.

"It's good to see you again," he said. "I was talking just now to a young man I chanced to meet in this place and he disappointed me quite gravely. I was explaining to him some of my vices, and he told me I should be proud of them and not ashamed. What stupidity! Why should I be pagan and unshamed? Shame is the most delicate of the sins. . . ."

"Look here, Ravenshaw," I said, "I must tell you one thing and then, if you wish, we'll speak no more about it."

He struck an attitude of courteous attention.

"Your wife," I told him, "is in a very bad state from worry. Now, for reasons that are your own—and I don't intend to pry into them—you've made a dark secret of your marriage and, so far as I'm concerned, your secret is perfectly safe. You probably know, or should know, that I'm no prating fool. So, although I've said my last on this subject when I've finished saying this, it's my opinion you should reassure that little woman in some way. Send her some word at least."

A fine-lined frown of perplexity creased Ravenshaw's forehead.

"My dear fellow," he said, "what in the world are you talking about? I know nothing about any marriage. I haven't any wife!"

In a few minutes I was reduced to such an absurd confusion that I have believed myself the victim of some extravagant delusion. The man utterly denied any knowledge of his home or Mrs. Ravenshaw. His denials were most suave, most gentle. He looked into my face compassionately. He gazed at me as if I were the victim of a piteous paranoia. The spell of his persistence was so potent that I was nearly persuaded of my own insanity. Then, in the end, I became foolishly angry. I made some harsh exclamation and arose from the bench. But Ravenshaw touched my arm.

"I thought you were a more liberal man," he murmured.

I stared at him.

"I've precedent for this," he added.

"What do you mean?" I demanded.

"Well," he replied, "the way was pointed by the apostle. If Peter denied our Lord Jesus Christ, I can't see why you should find it so astonishing when I deny my own wife!"

But with the utterance of that outrageous whimsy Ravenshaw gave up the struggle. That evening he rejoined the blonde Mrs. Ravenshaw, as she informed me very happily the following day.

"But if you talk with him," she said, "don't argue with him over anything foolish he may say. He's acting out one of his silly notions. Can you imagine? He solemnly declares that we've never been married. I'm humoring him."

She smiled with an expression of secret content.

"I've the marriage certificate, and it's been carefully preserved all these years, and that's quite enough for me!"

You will ask me, of course, to explain, first, why Ravenshaw deserted his wife and, second, why he returned on such astounding terms. I cannot be certain, but I have satisfied myself with

the following reasons. Ravenshaw, when his secret moral indulgence was discovered, found any further compliance with convention impossible. That he had been taken in a morality shamed him unspeakably. He ran away—fled from the place of his shame. And then, when he returned, he exacted a false assumption in order to preserve his self-respect. Am I wrong? Is this too fantastic? Judge then by the concluding facts.

VI

My poor friend Ravenshaw survived but a short time after this reunion. But it was not the return that killed him, but another thing. Carver W. Ravenshaw was slain by the Eighteenth Amendment. Prohibition killed him. He withered like a plant in a drought.

He drank, of course, up to the day of his death. But in spite of his love of the exotic, he simply could not thrive on a continual diet of synthetic liquors. The moonshine, the vile confections of South Street Italians slew him. Never provident enough to acquire a store of legitimate beverages while they were still obtainable, he was presently dependent upon the chance generosity of a friend who might open for him a cheering bottle of some veritable distillation. But such chance and infrequent inhibitions could not sustain a man of his bibulous need. He told me, in the fall of the year, that he was slowly dying of thirst. It was pitiful to see him elevate to the level of his sombre eyes a glass of some lifeless poison and exclaim:

"Look at that stuff! It's dead. Look at the green, cadaverous glint of it!"

In the spring, when all Nature was frondescent, that gaunt, strange man, that fellow of a million whimsies and thrice ten thousand charms, passed away.

He was buried from the home of his blonde wife. I went there to attend the ceremony, little expecting that posthumous dénouement to my friend's

life. I was amused when I found that Mrs. Ravenshaw, reverting to the theological prejudices of her childhood days, had called in a Baptist divine to conduct the obsequies. And before these were over that good gentleman of God doubtless wished himself in another place.

The coffin was revealed in the living-room. In death Ravenshaw wore an expression of unwonted severity. His thin lips, forever lost to their flexible animation, had folded themselves into an almost puritanical rigidity. It was a look that surprised me. And it was, I think, a look not without significance.

A little company of strangers and friends were gathered about the body. The clergyman began the service. And as the undertaker sifted a few flower petals upon the gaunt figure, two women disengaged themselves from the silent company and, with a simultaneous despair, flung themselves with outstretched arms across the coffin. Their hysterical lamentations deprived the occasion of all its decorum. The blonde Mrs. Ravenshaw, wiping the tears from her eyes, stared in amazement. Two white-gloved assistants to the undertaker attempted to disengage these women from the bier.

"My husband!" cried one.

"My Carver!" cried the other.

Yes, they were his wives. They were two of Carver W. Ravenshaw's three widows. Their moral right to his name was proved later. And I must mention that the three widows behaved very decently. There were no hard words spoken between them. In fact, they subsequently became friends. They used to talk together of the dear departed.

I have exposed these facts in order to bring to a quietus those calumnious tongues that since the death of my friend have found pleasure in slandering his memory. For, say what you will of Ravenshaw, he was no trifler with women. He believed in legitimate wedlock. He was, in this respect, a more than commonly moral man.

Americana

By Major Owen Hatteras

I

Arkansas

Extract from the *Green County Observer*, of Paragould, Ark., illustrating the state of public morals and literary style in that great commonwealth:

One of the most heartless crimes ever committed was that of throwing from a moving train at Tokio, a village fourteen miles north of Paragould, on the Cotton Belt Railroad, a five-months-old infant.

It makes the citizen who loves his fellowmen and loves and fears God shudder when he is made to realize that there are in this great and beautiful world in which we live characters who have become so depraved as to commit such a crime. If we were called upon to name the punishment for the demon that committed that act we would suggest that he be chained to a stake on the very spot where the body of that babe fell from the train, there to wreak out a miserable existence just as long as he could be kept alive.

It is said that several persons saw the child when it was thrown from the train.

Deputy Sheriff Cuppls, of Marmaduke, informed Judge Honey of the crime and Judge Honey issue instructions to bury the body there.

II

Illinois

Progress of Prohibition enforcement in Chicago, "the literary capital of the United States," as reported by the *Chicago Daily News*:

Every important building in the city has at least one tenant, and in many cases all, who are buyers or sellers of liquor. This does not cover the thousands of other places where liquor is bought and sold—saloons,

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soft-drink parlors, drug-stores, cigar-stores, candy-stores, poolrooms and roadhouses.

III

Maryland

Effects of patriotism upon the Beautitudes, as revealed by an obituary notice in the *Baltimore Sunpaper*:

The Society of Friends, of which she was a member, conducted the services. Burial was in the cemetery of the *Gunpowder Society of Friends of Priceville*.

IV

Michigan

Charge to the Detroit grand jury by the Hon. Clyde I. Webster, J.:

There are more disorderly women in Detroit than there ever were in the bad days. The liquor situation, too, is very bad. It is much worse than it ever was before Prohibition. To handle only the smuggling of the stuff over the river [from Canada] would require 200 men in plain clothes working 24 hours a day. Another staff of at least the same size would be necessary to take care of blind pigs and stills.

V

Nebraska

From a public bull issued by the Hon. William Jennings Bryan:

I would like to see a law that would require every man to put on public record just how much liquor he has stored in his cellar, and then I should like to see a graded income tax placed upon it. I do not think there is a busier man in this country than I am. I have

got to keep the Democratic party straight, I have got to see that Prohibition is enforced, and I have got to see that religion is defended.

VI

New York

From a bulletin issued by the Hon. H. S. Daniels, director of publicity of the Buick Motor Company:

Dr. John Roach Straton, of Calvary Baptist Church, New York City, has arranged for the Summer months a series of open-air revival meetings, and for this purpose has invented a portable pulpit, the supports of which rest upon the frame of his Buick car. This novel and ingenious device is attracting wide attention in the metropolis.

VII

Ohio

Antiphon intoned at the weekly meetings of the Rotary Club of Chillicothe:

LEADER

Ham and eggs!

CHORUS

Ham and eggs!

LEADER

I like mine fried good and brown.

CHORUS

I like mine fried upside down.

LEADER

Ham and eggs!

CHORUS

Ham and eggs!

LEADER

Flip 'em!

CHORUS

Flop 'em!

LEADER

Flop 'em!

CHORUS

Flip 'em!

ALL

Ham and eggs!

VIII

Oregon

From a printed "special appeal to guests" handed to everyone who registers at one of the leading hotels of Portland:

The Federal Prohibition Director demands our co-operation in the matter of the use of liquor in our hotel, and notice has been served

on all hotels of the risk taken and the penalty of closing if we are found to be evading the law.

Our rules, requiring gentlemen not accompanied by their wives to entertain their lady friends in the public parlor, and ladies not accompanied by their husbands to not entertain gentlemen in their bed rooms, is going to be enforced without fear or favor.

Any guest who is being disturbed by offensive drinking parties or the abuse of privileges granted by the hotel should promptly report same to the clerk on duty.

We shall have at all times on duty a special officer who will be clothed with police authority to enforce the rules with reference to liquor traffic and the other objectionable features referred to above. We are asking the support of our guests to make our hotel one of perfect service and the elimination of all things to which we are calling attention to enable us to properly obey the law and relieve us of unnecessary criticism.

IX

Tennessee

Evidence of intellectual activity in Nashville, from a recent issue of the *Nashville Tennessean*:

The long-expected debate at the Ryman auditorium between representatives of the two branches of the Church of Christ over the use of musical instruments in the services of the church will begin on Thursday night and continue for five days.

Dr. N. B. Hardeman, of Henderson, Tenn., has arrived in the city and will speak in behalf of those who oppose the use of musical instruments in the churches. Dr. Ira Boswell, of Georgetown, Ky., representing the branch favoring such music, has also arrived in the city.

The debates will begin each night at 7:45 o'clock.

X

South Carolina

Text of a proclamation issued by Governor McLeod over the great seal of South Carolina:

Whereas, I have been requested by Salem (Black River) church, the Business Men's Christian Club of Sumter, and other Christian men and women, to proclaim a day of humiliation and prayer to God that he remove the boll weevil from our fields, and am moved in sympathy by the spirit and earnest faith which prompted this request, and deep concern for the eradication of this dreadful pest, which is gnawing at the very foundation of the prosperity of our state, and

Whereas, I believe, with other Christian

people, that national evils are the result of disobedience to God, and that Divine Providence has permitted the boll weevil and other physical, social and economic evils as a judgment on our people, not only for their sins, but as a means of bringing them back to Him;

Now, therefore, I, Thomas G. McLeod, as governor of South Carolina, believing in the efficacy of prayer, and Divine Intervention in the hour of great need, do hereby designate Sunday, the tenth day of June, 1923, as a day of fasting and prayer to God for deliverance from the ravages of the boll weevil, in such way or ways as may seem wise to Him, *either by direct supernatural intervention, or through the workings of natural causes which are under His control*, in granting favorable seasons for the growth of our crops, multiplying the enemies of the pest, and guiding our people to the discovery of more efficient means of combating this evil.

XI

Washington

Evidence of the spread of Christianity

on the Pacific Coast, from an advertisement in the estimable Tacoma *Daily Ledger*:

THE TACOMA DAILY LEDGER'S
BIBLE DISTRIBUTION
COUPON

Two distinct styles of this wonderful Book of Books have been adopted for this great newspaper Bible distribution. One is the far-famed Red Letter Bible (Christ's sayings printed in red for immediate identification) and the Plain Print Bible for those who can spare but a nominal sum.

ONLY THREE COUPONS

Clip this coupon and two others and present or mail them to this paper with the sum set opposite either style, and come into possession of your Book of Books at once.

Style A—Red Letter Bible, over-lapping limp black leather covers, red edges, round corners, gold lettering, large, clear print, three coupons and only \$1.98.
Style B—Plain Print Bible, flush limp black seal grain textile leather cover, red edges, medium large type, strong and durable, three coupons and only 98c.



I Would Be Tender of You Now

By David Morton

I WOULD be tender of you, in this way:
That no great grief should bow your pitiful head,
And no blind, wandering sorrow ever stray
Over your threshold, bearing bitter bread.
I would be tender of you for the sake
Of frail and brief and lovely things that rise
Where pitiless storms forever gather and break;
I would be tender of you, in this wise.

Oh, yet my love brings all of these, and more:
Sorrow and storm and hurt of passionate hands,
And every letter spelled in grievous lore
Of storied lovers dead in storied lands;—
All—all are thorns I press upon your brow,—
I, who would be so tender of you, now.



Miss Kenny's Marriage

By Eric D. Walrond

I

IF you went into her shop and in a perfectly harmless way asked: "Is this Miss Kenny's Hair Parlor?" she would poke her coiffeured head at you and in a manner that you would not easily forget, reply: "Come in; this is Miss Kenny's *Beauty Parlor*."

There was a difference, you see, between a mere hair parlor and a beauty parlor. As she privately confided to a friend:

"I don't merely iron hair, girlie; I beautifies; and I am not a hairdresser at all, but a beauty culturist. There are so many two-cent hairdressers around Brooklyn, girlie, I want to strike out and be a pioneer and establish a regular trichological institute. That is why you see me working off my fingertips on the scalps of all these servant girls.

"Of course," Miss Kenny would add, "they are only a part, a very small part, of my regular trade. I can mention among my customers Rev. Brown's wife, Mme. Downing, Miss Jackson of the Y.W., Dr. Jones' niece—"

Again, if you walked into her cobwebby parlor and asked her if she had any of Mme. Walker's Hair Goods she would relax in a beautifully ingratiating smile, while her big wolfish eyes would widen in pity as she snapped:

"You see, I have no need to carry Mme. Walker's goods; other hairdressers have to carry mine. I can give you Mme. Kenny's Tar Hair Grower or Mme. Kenny's Glossine."

At the Antioch Baptist Church, where she worshiped, Miss Kenny's

reputation as a coloratura soprano equaled if it did not threaten that of the "nightingale of the race." Whenever anybody was getting up a pageant or a choir concert or anything in which Negro folk songs played a part Miss Kenny simply had to be in it, or it would not be "representative." Once an enterprising young acolyte from Jersey prepared a program and did not include Miss Kenny. The choir in question was to sing at the annual convention of the Christian Endeavor Societies. The day before it came off an anonymous letter appeared in the columns of the Negro press lambasting it as "inartistic, unmusical and not representative of Southern culture."

II

THE sun shone down brightly on the old dilapidated building in Atlantic avenue. Yes, she had it there—in Atlantic avenue. If any of her high-toned friends rebuked her for it she would retort: "I tell you, honey, when I came to Brooklyn Atlantic avenue had a good reputation. It is only since these Jews and Italians and low-down black folks moved on it that it got such a bad name. Of course it is so hard to get a decent place to move to nowadays that I thought the best thing to do was to stay, even though my friends ridicule me for it."

As a matter of fact, Miss Kenny, true to form, told only a part, a very small part, of the truth. Secretly she feared that if she took her shingle down and sought quarters uptown or down in the Myrtle avenue section, she would lose

her customers. Moreover, in spite of its bad plumbing and the fact that it was situated in the headquarters of a local Camorra, she loved it a great deal and a few weeks before had actually begun negotiations for the purchase of the house. That was just like her. Friends who had made a study of her reported that it was a habit which she could not easily get rid of. Not that Miss Kenny was a four-flusher in the ordinary sense of the word. Heavens, no! She simply delighted in beating around the bush and misleading folks as to her personal affairs.

Take the matter of money, for instance. She always made it a rule to say boisterously to a crowded room of patrons that she "never kept money in the house."

"It is so dangerous," she murmured, "with all these burglars and stick-up men tramping around, honey. Only this very forenoon a man—sure, a white man, girly. I am sick of 'em coming round here. I don't know where he got it from, but I could smell it loud on his breath. It was a good thing Mr. Daniels was in here at the time. He came in and asked me if I had any face powder, that he wanted to buy some. I told him he could get some on the corner at the druggist's, that I didn't carry any, so he left. These drunks come in so often, girly, I've got to be careful, awful careful."

Only a part of the truth. For as regular as the clock ticked she made it a point before going to bed at night to tie up the day's earnings in an old black stocking and hide it safely in one of the trunks on which she slept. Not that she was a miser and loved the smell or jingle of gold. But she liked, whenever she went down to the bank, to deposit two or three hundred dollars at a time. She liked, as she delighted in saying, to "make a decent showing." Moreover, the teller at the bank was a nice blond youth who parted his hair straight down the middle. She liked to look at his boyish cheeks; they were so round and ruddy. And whenever she made a "decent showing" the teller would smile

and show his pearl-white teeth and, metaphorically speaking, pat her on the back, muttering: "Go to it, Miss Kenny; go to it! You will soon reach the ten-thousand-dollar mark." Yes, Miss Kenny had money. Of course she could never admit it. She always made it a point to impress strangers (and friends alike) with her utter destitution.

Until far into the night Miss Kenny worked; God only knows how she stood it. Still she was up with the chickens in the morning. Usually a queue of patrons would be at the door waiting for her, as if she were a fortune-teller. One would be tempted to jump to all sorts of conclusions as to her magic power. But it was really her Tar Hair Grower that did it. Not since the time of the famous Mme. Walker had a preparation met with such overwhelming success. It went like wildfire. Girls and old women, spinsters and preachers' wives, scrubwomen and colored ladies of gentility, all raved over it. Decidedly it was a phenomenon. But when approached by a local ad man, Miss Kenny strenuously objected to what she called "immoral" advertising. The idea of being pulled down from her empyrean heights to the level of a cheap, everyday merchant caused her to shudder and grind her teeth as if she had the ague.

"Do doctors advertise?" she chirped. "Or only quacks? My customers advertise me. I haven't got to put out my wares that a-way. If a customer is satisfied she will tell somebody else, and if that person wants her hair done she will remember and come to me. I ain't got to stoop to such low tricks. My trade is not the harum-scarum, get-when-the-getting-is-good kind. It is what you call 'recommended.'"

One other peculiarity of Miss Kenny was that she never transacted business outside her store. You see, she had very definite ideas about business, especially about how it was conducted by colored people.

"I tell you, girly, we cullud folks are an unbusinesslike lot. Yesterday I

went on down to Mr. Daniels, the printer, to get some th'ow-arounds. Now I wanted to sit right there and count 'em, but Miss Murray of King Solomon Lodge was in at the time, and I didn't want her to think I was cranky. You know what I mean. Well, I paid him for them, taking his word for it that they was 5,000 in the package. When I got home I counted 'em and found that the rascal had only given me 2,643 and a half torn one. Of course I rang him up and told him that, while I did not look at it as an out-and-out attempt to rob me, I would be glad if he would be more businesslike in the future and not tell me 2,643 and a torn one is 5,000. As if I couldn't count!"

Once an enterprising young salesman met her on the street and tried to sell her a set of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Miss Kenny stood still with an interested smile on her lips and allowed him in rapid-fire language to rattle off his story. When the young man got around to that part which said something about brass tacks and contracts and so much down and so much a month Miss Kenny thought it was time to step in. Drawing herself up to an imperial height, she inquired: "Is this the right time and place to see me?" and swept on.

She had another very interesting reason for refusing to do business anywhere but in her store. If there ever was a psychologist, Miss Kenny was one and she knew it. She felt confident of her ability to out-argue any man who came into her store; and, as it was always crowded, she rejoiced in the effect it had on her dumb, sheep-faced customers. They formed a sort of wall around her and she felt surer of herself whenever she was thus fortified.

And Miss Kenny hadn't any secrets. What she had to say she said right out, declaring in no uncertain terms that she hadn't anything to hide, and if anybody wanted to go back and say she said so and so, why they could. Of course this was the best guarantee Miss Kenny had for the non-repetition of what she said, and no one knew that better than she.

Deep down in her heart she did not want everything she said repeated. Her tongue flew like a serpent's. Limitless in its scope, it lighted on this, that and a multitude of things. On Monday talk drifted around to what happened at church the day before. Sometimes it had to do with what the president of the men's guild had to say about married women who flirt. Or what Mrs. So-and-So wore, or the screech in somebody's voice. On Tuesday it edged around to the scandal of Undertaker Williams, whose newly wedded wife had mysteriously given birth to a baby! Wednesday and Thursday Miss Kenny always devoted to a discussion of her rivals. She liked to tell in her clever way of the almost universal use of her "grower" by the rest of the profession.

"Not that I care anything about them tearing off my labels and sticking on theirs," she snickered, "but they oughtn't to cry down my grower in public when they are using it in private themselves."

"But why don't you prosecute them, Miss Kenny?" volunteered a chorus. "Why don't you patent your grower so that they wouldn't get a chance to rob you?"

"Oh," she replied, with a dash of braggadocio, "I am not as mean and as low-down as all that. I want to see everybody live and make a living. There ain't none of the nigger in me, honey."

III

ONE day the visitors to Miss Kenny's parlor got the shock of their lives. True, it was not the first time she had received a telephone call, but such a call! As usual, the place was packed; packed from stem to stern. Three of her "girlies" actually succeeded in climbing into the old, scarlet upholstered barber's chair that constituted her chief item of furniture. On top of the mediaeval piano in the corner sat three long-faced patrons. The only two available chairs accommodated no less than five sweating Buddha-like persons. There

was scarcely room for her iron-chained door to swing to. Just the same they sat, and awaited their turn, while behind the ox-marrow curtain the cackling voice of Miss Kenny was astonishingly flippant.

"Her and I went down to see it last week. Yes, yes, but I don't know about that. I'd rather—not. Can't you make it Sunday? Aren't you coming to breakfast Sunday morning? No? Ugh. Oh, I see. Well, I'll have to tell Antony—Yes, I got it all right. Very lovely of you. All right, I'm busy mahself—place's crowded. S'long."

Yes, Miss Kenny, like every lady of her time, had a lover. Of course she had a naïve way of saying she had been favorably regarded by a number of marriageable young men. Always speaking in platitudes, it was easy for her to bamboozle her customers as to her charm and beauty. But the fact of the matter was Miss Kenny hadn't any charm or beauty at all. Persons in the know would look at the tar tumbling down the temples of her bronze face and retreat in terror. That, one would imagine, was a highly ingenious thing from a business standpoint. But socially it did not work. It was a miserable failure. Other beauty culturists, when the day's work was over, discarded their wreaths of hair nets and took down their coiffures and tidied up to conform to flapper standards. But Miss Kenny, with all her brains, hadn't brains enough to give herself a thorough tonsorial overhauling. Take the matter of water, for instance. If she could have reconciled herself to a liberal use of it on, say, her upper parts, around the region of her neck and shoulders, there is no telling, with that tongue of hers, what would have been the scope of her marital potentialities. But Miss Kenny hated water—hated it like poison.

When she put down the receiver and came out of her niche of a bedroom her customers one and all gasped at the woman's magic transformation. Miss Kenny was lavender pink!

"I tell you what, girls," she spoke

rapidly, "I've just had a hurried call from my legal adviser and he wants me to drop everything and come on down to the court right this minute. I am to testify in that curtain case I told you all about. Now I hate to do it, honest I do, for that is just what the white folks like to see us do. Two niggers squabbling in court over a pair of \$40 curtains! But it is the only way you can learn our folks a lesson—how to do business in the proper way. You've got to drag 'em right out in the light and let the white folks see what rascals—Can you all come back tomorrow? I guess I am late already. He said he'd be—that is, that I must be down there by two."

After the last one had gone Miss Kenny heaved a sigh of relief as she fastened the chain on the door. One would have thought that she would be in an awful hurry to get on her things and get out, but all she did was to pack the gas range and the hair straightener and the vaseline vial safely in a box under the sink. Going into a soap-box larder on the wall she extracted a huge broiled chicken and began to singe it. Deftly she cut it up, seasoning it as she did so. She took a paper bag of flour from the washtub and emptied the greater portion of it into a yellow platter. On top of this she broke an egg, poured in water and started to mix. That done, she took a cupful of cocoa and poured it into a kettle on the fire. Meanwhile she opened a door in the side of her room leading to the hallway. Poking out her ferret face, Miss Kenny yelled "Antony!" Instantly a little Italian girl appeared.

"Run down to the corner and buy me a dime of lettuce, Antony. Hurry, honey."

Back in her smoke-filled room Miss Kenny laid the table. She flung the greasy curtain that separated the sitting-room from her passageway of a work-room on top of the pole, so as to be able to get the maximum of service out of her magnificent dining table. There was a bit of romance attached to that table. Over in Jersey—but this certainly

is not the place for it. Miss Kenny went down to the bottom of her trunk and dug up the prettiest silver set you ever want to see. As she worked, her face grew blacker and blacker. Not only did the tar begin to trickle down the sides of it; even her neck became infected. Alarmed, Miss Kenny took her apron and made a big westward wipe. What she saw on the apron as she held it up before her eyes sent her scurrying in front of the mirror. Then began the beautification of Miss Kenny. First, she took the big steel brush on the mantel and gave the bushel of horse hair on her head a vicious stay-as-you-are-put. Next she took a wet towel and lathered her face good and plenty. Yes, she went down in her trunk and forked up a cake of honest-to-goodness soap. Not cold cream—soap. After a speedy rub or two on her neck she ducked under the curtain that led to her sleeping quarters. When she came out again she wore an immaculate apron—one so high at the top that it covered up her oil-glittering neck. It had a challenging effect. Only one thing got lost in the shuffle—the perpetual shine on Miss Kenny's face. It now looked as if it had been banished by an edict from On High. Miss Kenny had a liberal dab of powder on her nose.

IV

ABOUT five minutes later Miss Kenny heard someone knocking at the door. Going to it as fast as her feet could carry her she curtsied as she ushered in Counsellor Elias Ramsey.

Miss Kenny was a woman of about forty-eight. The Counsellor was just turning twenty-five. What prompted a man of his age and standing to pay homage to a woman who could be his mother, and a hairdresser besides, is not our purpose to disclose. Suffice to say Mr. Ramsey was a young man born and bred in Brooklyn. Haughty and dictatorial, it was easy to see that he came from Brooklyn. No, he had not studied at the University of Berlin, nor had he in any way come under the influence of

Germans. Germans, after all, are awfully nice people, and Mr. Ramsey was not only human, but a dull, unemotional person. In him one got an edifying glimpse of the Negro placed in a community where there is a minority of colored folk. All his life had been spent among white people and, being what he was, uppity, ignorant, arrogant, he felt that he was not only the equal of the best of white men, but superior to a whole lot of them. But even Napoleon stoops to conquer, and the mere fact that he had condescended to dine with the hairdresser was proof of Mr. Ramsey's stooping to conquer. For, don't forget, Mr. Ramsey belonged to one of the oldest families of color in Brooklyn. He was bound hard and fast to the rule not to commingle with aliens, outsiders—that is, anybody who could not trace his ancestors back to the Battle of Long Island. And Miss Kenny had been in Brooklyn only three years.

"I thought I'd be able to get you a nice pork chop," said Miss Kenny as they started to eat, "but I chased all over the block and couldn't get a single one. This chicken is not as tender as I thought it was."

As a rule, Mr. Ramsey allowed Miss Kenny to do all the talking. It was an arrangement that she, like most of her sex, delighted in. Lawyers have such an enormous lot to think about. She liked to sit and reel off tales of her own creation for his amusement and edification. While Mr. Ramsey, being a Brooklynite, kept his eyes open and his mouth shut. It is significant to note, however, that whenever he spoke it was in a dry, legal-like fashion with very little animation. To him it was the same as dining out with a client, but Miss Kenny interpreted every word, every glance, every touch of the hand as a bit of well-directed flattery and giggled over it. Contrasting her with the cold, austere hair-ironer, one is obliged to reflect damningly on the iconoclasm of love. Yes, he had Miss Kenny completely in his power, and if you chanced to look at him you would have won-

dered how he managed to do it. There was not anything prepossessing about the man. He had thin, sandy hair, a weak yellow complexion, and eyes that always looked past you. But Miss Kenny, it must be explained, paid no attention to such trifles. He was a man. That settled it. And she was man-mad. One of her life's ambitions was to marry and settle down. So when Mr. Ramsey asked her to become his wife one is consummately at a loss to adequately picture the emotions and heart-beats of Miss Kenny.

"Oh, Elias," she cried, "if you only knew how happy I am. At last my prayers are answered. Now I shall be able to take my place in society, to go out and not wash hair all my life. The wife of a prominent lawyer! It is big enough to swell my head."

"But—" It was the restraining voice of her legal adviser—"as I told you the other day, Catherine, I've got a long way to go yet. I've just started out, and it takes time to get established."

"As if I didn't know," she reproached, climbing up into his lap, "as if I'd let you bear all the burden of our love. Elias, I love you so blamed much I am willing to bury myself in this rotten old hole the rest of my life, so long as I know I'm helping you. And don't think I haven't been saving my money, sweetie. Here, I'll run and show you."

She got down and with a girlish swing disappeared behind the curtain. As she returned, in her joyful mood, she failed to note the look in her legal adviser's eyes.

"Look," she said, "this is what it is to date."

Mr. Ramsey looked. What he saw fairly brought the blood to his face, but he was a lawyer, an emotionless lawyer, and from Brooklyn. Nine thousand five hundred and eighty-six dollars!

"And that does not include yesterday's nor today's receipts," broke in Miss Kenny. "Yesterday alone I made \$34. Fancy my working until one and two o'clock in the morning doing heads! Nor has this anything to do

with the money I am paying on the house. Let me see, I think there is only a first mortgage of \$1,200 left. I don't think I have done so bad for three years."

Evidently these mundane things had no place in Mr. Ramsey's universe. As he spoke she glimpsed in his eyes the dreamily idealistic light which had attracted her from the beginning.

"That is very well, Catherine. It is frugal and commendable. It is the quality a man admires in a woman. But you see I had in mind getting a job nights as an elevator operator or porter. It really doesn't matter what I do, so long as I get the money. Or perhaps I could pick up my trombone again—only that would be kind of out of place just now. I could not very well get away with that and practice, too. I know what I'll do, I'll get a porter's job out on Long Island somewhere at night so as to earn money enough to support both of us."

Miss Kenny was horrified at the determination she saw in his eyes. A lawyer working nights as a porter? Unthinkable! That was the very thing she wanted the men of the race to get away from!

"Why, Elias, who ever put such a crazy idea into your head? Do you think I'd allow you to sacrifice your wonderful future doing work of that kind? My dear, that is the least of our worries. With this shop going I alone can clean up \$100 a week. No, dearie, get the idea out of your head. Get it out entirely. What is mine is as good as yours."

"Just as you wish," sighed Mr. Ramsey wearily. "Only I don't want to impose on you in any way."

"Oh, my darling boy, I can understand how you must feel. I can! I can. But, sweetie, I want you to love and trust and confide in me. Only that and everything will come out all right. Don't think for a moment that I am trying to be the man. I am not! I don't believe in all this talk about woman's suffrage noways. Woman's place is in the home and she ought to

stay there. Don't for a moment think of being obligated in any way. When two people love each other they are as good as one in flesh and blood; in everything, in fact."

"Well," sighed Mr. Ramsey again, "I am glad you look at the thing in the right light. I certainly——"

"Don't say it, honey," interjected Miss Kenny, planting a wet kiss on his lips, "don't utter a single word. Don't I understand thoroughly? Trust me, honey, lay your head on my bosom and stop mourning. I am too experienced not to know any better."

V

Up to the eve of her wedding Miss Kenny worked. All that day a stream of frenzied folk poured into the tar-smelling establishment to bid her God-speed. It is at such times that one's popularity is tested. While Miss Kenny was not in any sense a member of the olive-skinned aristocracy of Brooklyn, there was evidence abundant to testify to the esteem in which she was held by, as she pertly expressed it, "gangs and gangs of folks." Presents of all descriptions were received that afternoon, and Miss Kenny, while presiding over a turbulently unruly head, rolled out thanks and appreciations to her affectionate friends. Even Mme. Kennedy, a rival hairdresser, thought she would send the tar queen bride a lovely bunch of geraniums.

Miss Kenny was so impressed that she ordered one of her "girlies" to sit right down and scribble the lady a grateful note of acknowledgment. She was too busy, she explained, to stop and wash her hands just to write a short note. The girl, not stopping to investigate Miss Kenny's chirographic ability, wrote it, and read it to her, after which it was despatched to Miss Kennedy. Out of the morass of gifts she received Miss Kenny cherished one more than all the others. It was the charming lavallière sent her by the Willing Workers Club of the Antioch Baptist Church.

The day broke calm and beautiful as Miss Kenny prepared for the event of her life. To assist her in her trousseau Miss Kenny had a friend, Mrs. Williams, from across the street. The knowledge of Miss Kenny's forthcoming marriage had penetrated every home on Atlantic avenue. As the hour drew near a curious mob gathered in front of the now gorgeously decorated store. The fact that Miss Kenny elected to marry in her dingy workshop did not seem to bother anyone. Fortunately, the hour was fixed toward sundown, so as to enable her attendant, Mrs. Bryan, who did housework in Flatbush, to get there in time. Mr. Ramsey was accompanied by a colleague of his, a Mr. Blake. The wedding was a simple one. Nothing exciting or unduly dramatic took place. The bride and groom were both there, as arranged, and there was no third party to bolt in at the last moment to claim either. The bridal supper was served on Miss Kenny's magnificent table, the pastor presiding in the upholstered barber's chair. Everyone had a good time. At midnight the couple departed for Atlantic City, where, the local colored weekly informed the public a few days later, they spent an enjoyable five-day honeymoon. During her absence Miss Kenny left Mrs. Bryan in charge, who, because she did not happen to be Miss Kenny, only served to spirit away the regular inflow of trade. They were content to wait, pouted the beauty lovers, until Miss Kenny returned from her honeymoon.

Yes, Miss Kenny got back safely. Her small black squirrel eyes sparkled as she told them about the wonderful time she had had. Once more on her throne, she ruled in the old queenly way.

"Chile, I never knowed what love was until I got married. All the time I felt it was a feeling you could shake off at will, like hunger or thirst. But, girlie, it is a tremendous thing. Tremendous! Takes hold of you by the collar and says, 'Here, you are in my clutches for the balance of your life. So look out now!' Just like that."

dered how he managed to do it. There was not anything prepossessing about the man. He had thin, sandy hair, a weak yellow complexion, and eyes that always looked past you. But Miss Kenny, it must be explained, paid no attention to such trifles. He was a man. That settled it. And she was man-mad. One of her life's ambitions was to marry and settle down. So when Mr. Ramsey asked her to become his wife one is consummately at a loss to adequately picture the emotions and heart-beats of Miss Kenny.

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"But—" It was the restraining voice of her legal adviser—"as I told you the other day, Catherine, I've got a long way to go yet. I've just started out, and it takes time to get established."

"As if I didn't know," she reproached, climbing up into his lap, "as if I'd let you bear all the burden of our love. Elias, I love you so blamed much I am willing to bury myself in this rotten old hole the rest of my life, so long as I know I'm helping you. And don't think I haven't been saving my money, sweetie. Here, I'll run and show you."

She got down and with a girlish swing disappeared behind the curtain. As she returned, in her joyful mood, she failed to note the look in her legal adviser's eyes.

"Look," she said, "this is what it is to date."

Mr. Ramsey looked. What he saw fairly brought the blood to his face, but he was a lawyer, an emotionless lawyer, and from Brooklyn. Nine thousand five hundred and eighty-six dollars!

"And that does not include yesterday's nor today's receipts," broke in Miss Kenny. "Yesterday alone I made \$34. Fancy my working until one and two o'clock in the morning doing heads! Nor has this anything to do

with the money I am paying on the house. Let me see, I think there is only a first mortgage of \$1,200 left. I don't think I have done so bad for three years."

Evidently these mundane things had no place in Mr. Ramsey's universe. As he spoke she glimpsed in his eyes the dreamily idealistic light which had attracted her from the beginning.

"That is very well, Catherine. It is frugal and commendable. It is the quality a man admires in a woman. But you see I had in mind getting a job nights as an elevator operator or porter. It really doesn't matter what I do, so long as I get the money. Or perhaps I could pick up my trombone again—only that would be kind of out of place just now. I could not very well get away with that and practice, too. I know what I'll do, I'll get a porter's job out on Long Island somewhere at night so as to earn money enough to support both of us."

Miss Kenny was horrified at the determination she saw in his eyes. A lawyer working nights as a porter? Unthinkable! That was the very thing she wanted the men of the race to get away from!

"Why, Elias, who ever put such a crazy idea into your head? Do you think I'd allow you to sacrifice your wonderful future doing work of that kind? My dear, that is the least of our worries. With this shop going I alone can clean up \$100 a week. No, dearie, get the idea out of your head. Get it out entirely. What is mine is as good as yours."

"Just as you wish," sighed Mr. Ramsey wearily. "Only I don't want to impose on you in any way."

"Oh, my darling boy, I can understand how you must feel. I can! I can. But, sweetie, I want you to love and trust and confide in me. Only that and everything will come out all right. Don't think for a moment that I am trying to be the man. I am not! I don't believe in all this talk about woman's suffrage noways. Woman's place is in the home and she ought to

stay there. Don't for a moment think of being obligated in any way. When two people love each other they are as good as one in flesh and blood; in everything, in fact."

"Well," sighed Mr. Ramsey again, "I am glad you look at the thing in the right light. I certainly——"

"Don't say it, honey," interjected Miss Kenny, planting a wet kiss on his lips, "don't utter a single word. Don't I understand thoroughly? Trust me, honey, lay your head on my bosom and stop mourning. I am too experienced not to know any better."

V

Up to the eve of her wedding Miss Kenny worked. All that day a stream of frenzied folk poured into the tar-smelling establishment to bid her God-speed. It is at such times that one's popularity is tested. While Miss Kenny was not in any sense a member of the olive-skinned aristocracy of Brooklyn, there was evidence abundant to testify to the esteem in which she was held by, as she pertly expressed it, "gangs and gangs of folks." Presents of all descriptions were received that afternoon, and Miss Kenny, while presiding over a turbulently unruly head, rolled out thanks and appreciations to her affectionate friends. Even Mme. Kennedy, a rival hairdresser, thought she would send the tar queen bride a lovely bunch of geraniums.

Miss Kenny was so impressed that she ordered one of her "girlies" to sit right down and scribble the lady a grateful note of acknowledgment. She was too busy, she explained, to stop and wash her hands just to write a short note. The girl, not stopping to investigate Miss Kenny's chirographic ability, wrote it, and read it to her, after which it was despatched to Miss Kennedy. Out of the morass of gifts she received Miss Kenny cherished one more than all the others. It was the charming lavallière sent her by the Willing Workers Club of the Antioch Baptist Church.

The day broke calm and beautiful as Miss Kenny prepared for the event of her life. To assist her in her trousseau Miss Kenny had a friend, Mrs. Williams, from across the street. The knowledge of Miss Kenny's forthcoming marriage had penetrated every home on Atlantic avenue. As the hour drew near a curious mob gathered in front of the now gorgeously decorated store. The fact that Miss Kenny elected to marry in her dingy workshop did not seem to bother anyone. Fortunately, the hour was fixed toward sundown, so as to enable her attendant, Mrs. Bryan, who did housework in Flatbush, to get there in time. Mr. Ramsey was accompanied by a colleague of his, a Mr. Blake. The wedding was a simple one. Nothing exciting or unduly dramatic took place. The bride and groom were both there, as arranged, and there was no third party to bolt in at the last moment to claim either. The bridal supper was served on Miss Kenny's magnificent table, the pastor presiding in the upholstered barber's chair. Everyone had a good time. At midnight the couple departed for Atlantic City, where, the local colored weekly informed the public a few days later, they spent an enjoyable five-day honeymoon. During her absence Miss Kenny left Mrs. Bryan in charge, who, because she did not happen to be Miss Kenny, only served to spirit away the regular inflow of trade. They were content to wait, pouted the beauty lovers, until Miss Kenny returned from her honeymoon.

Yes, Miss Kenny got back safely. Her small black squirrel eyes sparkled as she told them about the wonderful time she had had. Once more on her throne, she ruled in the old queenly way.

"Chile, I never knowed what love was until I got married. All the time I felt it was a feeling you could shake off at will, like hunger or thirst. But, girlie, it is a tremendous thing. Tremendous! Takes hold of you by the collar and says, 'Here, you are in my clutches for the balance of your life. So look out now!' Just like that."

Suddenly the telephone rang.

"Oh, Elias," sobbed Miss Kenny, "do come on up at once. I must see you this very minute. My head starts to ache me as if it will never stop. Try, honey, and break away. I am dying to be in your arms again."

Yes, Miss Kenny was happily married. And if anyone out in the street dropped a remark about her still "doing heads" her blatant defense was, "That is just like us cullud folks. I tell you, girlie, I am not like a lot of these new niggers you see floating around here. A few hundred dollars don't frighten me. Only we used-to-nothing cullud folks lose our heads and stick out our chests at sight of a few red pennies."

"Tell 'em I'll stop working when I've got a million dollars in the bank, so that I won't have to go to anybody and ask them to lend me some."

So there she was, as homely in her philosophy as of old, with a primitive pride, bigoted, lovable, and as happy as any bride need be.

VI

THERE came a time, however, when fate blew harsh and stormy winds to Miss Kenny's gates. It was about three months after her ecstatic wedding. The counsellor, it seemed, had succeeded in getting her to daub the old shack with a coat of chocolate brown paint. It stood out from the rest of the chaff along the block. Bit by bit the tale leaked out. How true it was no one had been able to say, as Miss Kenny was naturally reticent, and it would take a wrecking crane to hoist anything out of her. But it had to come out, and one evening, throwing a dark shawl over her shoulders, Miss Kenny made her way to the house of her friend, Mrs. Bryan, in Downing Street. As she rang the bell and was let in, Mrs. Bryan

gasped as she saw the big black rings around Miss Kenny's eyes. Tar or no tar, it was clear that Miss Kenny had been weeping—weeping her soul out. "O, Teresa, Teresa, what must I do? My God, to think that my marriage is a failure!"

"Tell me, Miss Kenny, what is ailing you? You are delirious!"

"No, I ain't, Mrs. Bryan. I ain't delirious. I'm perfectly normal. Oh, my God, what is to 'come of me? All my savings gone, just gone like a-thet! It was about three nights ago—yes, Wednesday night. I had a terrible headache and was lying crossways on the bed. Elias had just come in from work and after having his supper was sitting outside, smoking. My head ached so I asked him to go and get me the cologne. Oh, Mrs. Bryan, I hate to say it. It galls me. Yes, he went to the chiffonier, and brought me the bottle with the cologne. I asked him to wet a towel with some and put it on my forehead. That is the last thing I knew. All I remember is seeing him hovering around me, with the wet towel in his hand. And the room seemed to be suffocated with chloroform or something, but I thought it was the cologne and fell asleep. This morning I went down to the bank and I was surprised to learn that my account was overdrawn. Can you imagine it? Over nine thousand dollars was taken out. Of course I laughed and told the teller that he must have made a mistake, but he said no, and went to the drawer and brought out a cashed cheque and showed it to me. It was my signature all right. There was no denying that."

"But who was it made out to?" screamed Mrs. Bryan, "who got the money?"

"Elias, chile, Elias Ramsey," sobbed Miss Kenney, "I wonder where I can find him."



Rickard's Daughter

By Lois Seyster Montross

I

HE frequented the most bland and adequate of cabarets; and his presence contributed to their blandness and adequacy. His leer was so naïve, so joyously wicked—old bald head, important paunch, round, red-rimmed eyes, a way he had of leaning folded arms on a table and thrusting out his chin while he breathed heavily and smiled with indescribable gusto. His calm rudeness stamped him as an habitué; his carelessness with silverware, cigar ashes and food; his drunken insistence on seeing the managers, and his insulting denunciations of head-waiters.

He would enter a cabaret or road-house smiling and leering and passing his well-kept hand over his bald spot. The other hand hovered at Mildred's arm or shoulder. She seemed quiescent or defiant—like an immobile mask, her astonishingly red and white layers of paint made her expression indeterminate. And the head-waiter would hurry forward, forgetful of old insults, convinced as were the diners by Rickard's illusion of his tremendous importance.

Now Rickard disputed the restaurant person like a capricious child. The head-waiter would gravely alter his suggestion and start confidently to lead Rickard and the girl to a "good" table; looking about he always saw with the chagrin of an unfollowed church usher that Rickard had established himself at another table across the room. If he were not too drunk he would change to still another site, and then he would argue loudly over the menu until he

had thoroughly established himself as a man of vast discrimination.

"Where's Parker? Call Parker!" He would reiterate the manager's name until the underlings looked about with a nervous and desperate assumption of contempt. "This inattention—this damned stupidity—'s gone far enough!" His hoarse voice would abruptly break into devoted tenderness; thrusting his face almost against the red and white mask opposite, he would cajole: "Come on, sweetheart, what'll you have? Do you know how much I love you? Shrimps or blue points? She wants some blue points," he would decide without having her choice, and grin up at the waiter with sudden good humor and courtesy.

There was always a couple near who were "slumming," and they hushed their conversation, exchanging in glances the triumphant discovery that here was a real roué with a young chorus girl! Oblivious to them, Rickard would continue, fatuously pressing one of the girl's feet between his own, "Would my little sweetheart like to go to Cuba next month? . . . I'm pouring you out two fingers. I'll have the waiter bring you some ginger ale. Damn that fellow! Wonder where Parker is? Parker'll do anything for me. . . . Don't know what an insp'ration you are to me, sweetheart. Get prettier every day. You're a beautiful woman, do you know it? *Where's my shrimps?* Did I order shrimps? Well, I can't help it if I didn't! I want shrimps, waiter, S-H-R-imps—*shrimps!* Deaf, heh? Find Mr. Parker at once. And give me two tickets for the matinée. . . . Ain't a theatre? Well, I

never said it was a theatre. Who the hell wants to go to a theatre when he can gaze into the c'ruean depths of such wonderful eyes. 'Won-der-ful ey-ey-es, that made—my heart—a—gar-den—' ”

As he sang the slummers stared so that he caught their curious glances and made them blush by calling out, "Why you looking at me? Am I the only person in this joint that can afford whiskey? Come on over, have a drink. . . . 'Won-der-ful eyes—that made my heart—a—gar-den—' ”

He knew only very old and sentimental popular songs. His clothes seemed cut in the same period as his songs, but, strangely enough, he gave them an air of being right; and there was no doubt that they were expensive and that he selected his shirts, however badly, from Capper and Capper. His pink, clean-shaven jowls hung flabbily above a stiff shining collar of a height and model that any Crystal Palace sport would have scorned to wear.

Yet the young sports in the bland and adequate cafés looked at him respectfully and felt more abandoned and danced more loose-jointedly after Rickard appeared. His enjoyment was infectious, his youthfulness exuded gaiety in these places where gaiety least often intrudes. Despite his garrulous insolence, the cabaret managements welcomed him—he paid well for the liquor and jazz that inspired his behavior, and other people paid well to watch him so behave.

And the old, white-moustached dogs, secure in the fatness of their wallets and their names, beckoned across to him to join them and whispered to Pardee, the Giant Truck representative from Los Angeles, whom they were showing the town: "Here's old Rick—you'll like him—great old boy! Alderman of the —th Ward; very powerful here in Chicago."

Then when Rickard had made his profane and tortuous approach through the swirling eddies of the dance floor he would speak in a low, courteous voice and grasp hands with dignified politeness, never dreaming that his associates

called him "Rick" and "great old boy." Turning to the girl, he would present her graciously, "My daughter, Mildred."

With winks he did not see, the old gentlemen soberly appeared to accept the quaint pretence of years; and as they respectfully addressed her as Miss Rickard, Pardee (already befuddled) and curious slummers would feel disappointed and defrauded.

Rickard and his daughter were indefatigable in trailing their poor gaiety from haunt to haunt, but their quest was scarcely piteous, since Rickard never failed to color the scene with his own bright pleasure. This bald-headed old man, cavorting ludicrously to synopated music, more youthfully delighted than the youths whose toes he trod upon! This quiescent or defiant girl, tirelessly dusting her face red and white to the same clownish degree! They knew why "Lucky" Price quit the old Erie and went to wait on Red Lantern patrons. They followed Dolly Antoni's fortunes from the Friar's Inn to the Entertainment. They had "gone cabaraying" when Les and Bert were singing "In Room 202" at the Arsonia, near Paulina and West Madison; and now they listened to robust, red-faced Les tell confidentially at the Glow-worm that "you gotta see mama every night or you can't see mama at all."

Of late, when Rickard asked his daughter "Where next?" she said carelessly, "Oh, the Glow-worm." Les, notorious for his solemn, pink-cheeked, farm-boy face, knew them now and often made their table audience for his prancing and bellowing. He pranced with so much vigorous swagger and bellowed so raucously that the convulsed pair always agreed there was "nobody like that Les!"

II

MILDRED had always been the obviously unexpectant girl in many choruses. She had pursued an amazingly persistent path from musical comedy to roof garden; she met abuse and ridicule with the phlegmatic stur-

diness of a plain girl of no imagination or sensitiveness.

"Shake a leg there! Get some pep! Look like you was *enjoying* that dance, you, at the end of the line!"

Her dull eyes gazed indifferently past the irritated director—she forced a smile, her rather horse-like face sullenly courageous. She danced night after night stolidly aware that she was the girl no man in the audience would smile upon. She tripped down runways, half-heartedly imitating the pretty girls ahead. She did not seem hurt when the favor she tossed a diner dropped to the floor unnoticed.

In most "follies" and "frolics" there is a scene in which girl after girl appears with coy, dragging steps, wearing an exaggerated hodge-podge of gorgeous feathers and glittering sequins. Usually one girl fails of enough prettiness to make the fantastic adornment plausible as female attire. . . . Mildred was always that girl.

The spotlight on her, the orchestra playing for her, she would begin boldly to trail her resplendence across the open stage; wagging grotesquely over her ash-colored hair, the terrific head-dress seemed to wink and grimace in apology. Her smile grew set and rather ashamed. That mannikin sliding of the one foot over to the other should have been flaunting or liting or provocative—she did it woodenly, as if begging the cruelly silent audience to forgive her for doing it at all. And all the time a certain callousness born of long experience lingered in her manner and made her failure more offensive than appealing.

Nevertheless, "Who is that girl?" old Rick had asked at the Dream Gardens, and he had meant Mildred. And she had heard mad, appreciative clapping at last. To Rickard her slow, unbelieving smile seemed magically piquant. "There's something to that girl," he explained to his friends, "something hypnotic — I feel it — I always feel that about people. Some have it and some don't. And that girl does."

Suspicious of her good fortune, she was cautious at first and she carefully tested his promises before she gave up her livelihood. Then with the same amazing, dull bravery she took up Rickard's life, enduring its dissipations, embarrassments and boredom with the dogged tenacity that was intrinsically herself.

"Honest, daddy, I don't hardly know how to act in this," she would protest, donning the squirrel cape he presented, and trailing with her old, apologetic mannikin steps across his velvet carpet. Her self-conscious giggle would arouse the fund of platitudes that he solemnly uttered as if they were alert thoughts: "See here, little lady, get rid of that don't-know-how-to-act stuff. You're a queen, that's what, and you've got to learn to show people. Look at me—look how I breed confidence in the hearts of men and make felt that innate magnetism that suggests, *suggests*—" he was saturated with muggy ideas of popular psychology. He strung fine-sounding words together in meaningless sentences that he uttered in effective, resonant tones:

"Little girl, I'm going to *make* you, see? You don't know all my plans, but they're involved and deep. Involved. Complex. All my relationships are very strange, very insidious. I have my hand on the secret channels of this great city. I have only to beckon and the underworld assembles to do my bidding. Maybe you didn't know this, heh, little sweetheart? You don't see it on the surface. But I'm going to teach you—and remember the first thing is confidence, *confidence*!"

To his few old friends who knew her origin he pronounced her "peculiarly charming"; and to her old comrades she proclaimed him "awful deep and a real good scout even if he is bald and dresses kind of funny."

III

"So you want to go to the Glow-worm, do you?" He leaned back contentedly in the car he drove himself,

and his free hand toyed with one of the monstrous earrings she wore.

"Yes, I'd kind of like to."

"How about a different kind of place? The Drake? How about that?"

"No—I like the people better at the Glow-worm. And don't you think there's good jazz there?"

"Nobody like that Les, is there, sweetheart?"

She looked out at the park: still trees black against snow and round, golden lamps echoing the round, golden moon. Her harsh voice tricked her in the middle of her reply—"Oh . . . Les—"

The old man peered at her and saw her gloved hands twisting nervously in her lap. Les was young; she was young. . . . He dropped her earring and gripped the steering-wheel. He drove silently to the Glow-worm.

It was late, and the Saturday night crowd swarmed on the dance floor. Rickard chose a table near the orchestra dais, where the entertainers began their songs. He was courteous, grave and very tender. She knew him best when he was sodden and rude and his polished politeness thrust her back into the dingy world where she belonged. She arranged her ash-colored curls under her purple hat and viewed her staring red and white features absently in the mirror of her huge vanity case. . . .

Very pink-cheeked, very clean and robust, and incongruous as always in his tight evening clothes, Les stood squarely on great, widespread legs, his chin sunken, his eyes dreamy as if he were far away from the whining saxophones that heralded his song. At some secret cue he suddenly raised his head and remarked lugubriously:

*"Monday night I sat alone,
Tuesday night you did not 'phone—"*

His broad hands hung straight at his sides. Purposely awkward and colorless, he pursued a low, childlike plaint:

*"Friday night you dogged my path,
Saturday night you took your bath!"*

Titters ran like the faint crackling of

flames from table to table. Nobody like that Les—nobody!

Rickard's round, red eyes were on the girl. She displayed the set smile she used to force in the chorus, but her eyes looked stricken . . .

*"Sunday night you called on me,
But y' brought your wife and fam-
ilee—"*

Les twisted his mouth ruefully as if he were near tears. He choked. His voice fell and was drowned by the snorting jazz. All at once he tossed his head, and his thick red neck bulged over his collar; with a great bellow he leaped down from the platform, swinging his arms and prancing, his fresh buoyancy bubbling up from bottomless wells of strength and well-being and animal rowdyism.

*"Oh, you gotta see mama EVERY
NIGHT,
Or you can't see mama a-tall—"*

What was an old man's creaking talent for gaiety before youth's lithe genius to be itself? Rickard's shoulders drooped, his hand smoothed his bald spot, he spoke to the waiter in a low, dull tone.

"I thought I ordered shrimps. But it doesn't matter. I'll take these blue points."

The waiter stared at him. Old Rickard must be very drunk indeed.

IV

THE next night Rickard came alone to the Glow-worm. As he slipped out of his too-long, velvet-collared overcoat he patted the check girl's cheek with indifferent fingers.

He went in, a solitary old man plainly endeavoring to walk erectly and with jauntiness. He seated himself at the outskirts of the thin crowd. It was so early that the place was half empty and seemed desolate. The orchestra played with casual languor for one dancing couple. The pair stopped in the mid-

dle of the floor waiting for an encore. The man cast about for small talk:

"There's old Rickard. Know him? Alderman of the —th Ward. He got a big name working for prohibition. He sure knows all the dirty work that goes on in this town. One of these old-time politicians—stay in office till he dies. Got some big pull with the Wops and Hunyaks. Wonder where his daughter is. . . . Bet she's his daughter, like hell!"

They were dancing again, and Rickard watched them a moment, wondering how they managed those queer, intricate steps. But his eyes grew red once more as he thought of Les. He was young. And she was young. . . . Poor child—if she wasn't happy? He wanted her to be happy. Yes, before God, he would make her happy. A beautiful girl—a queen! She ought to have a nice little home and a strong young husband and little children prattling at her knee—beautiful motherhood! Beautiful sacrifices for lovely, innocent children! His eyes became suffused at his sentimental vision.

"I may be a rake," he told himself, "fond of my Scotch—a shrewd politician—amorous—pretty gay—but, damn it! underneath I'm a great respecter of the Moral Laws: Marriage and Children and Decent Living—the bulwark of our mighty nation! I must give her up, give her up, and place her in her rightful sphere where she will blossom into the fine flower of glorious womanhood. Too bad she didn't fall for a wealthy young man of good family, but, after all, she comes of circus people, and if she feels drawn to this Les, by God, she's going to have him!"

He saw himself now the wise, noble administrator of a young girl's affairs, renouncing his own deep passion for the purity of love and the blessings of the sacred ceremony. He heard the minister's solemn words, "I now pronounce you man and wife—" himself standing apart, watching with wet, generous eyes the radiant young people he had brought together. He tingled at this scene and at the picture of himself

afterward, lonely, silent and uncomfortable—his virtuous ardor knew no bounds.

Peering about the room, he saw Les chatting with some friends at a nearby table. He motioned to the singer and in a moment Les was beside him.

"Sit down, young man," said Rickard with the suave patronage of his unassailable greatness. "Here's my flask right under the tablecloth—" he waved at the protruding lump graciously—"help yourself—here's a glass. I'm all alone tonight." He drank to Les, insinuating, "Here's to your future good fortune."

He did not find it difficult to proceed, spurred as he was by drink and righteousness. Nor did Les seem astounded. He had heard many queer propositions in his day. His ox-like mind was not easily surprised. He gulped the excellent whiskey gratefully.

"—and this beautiful girl," continued Rickard in his dramatic, resonant voice, "does, I have reason to think, admire and respect you. I am going to do a strange thing, my boy—but I want no gratitude—no recompense—only some day when you clasp this fair young wife to your breast and gaze on the sleeping form of your child—"

"*Child?*" said Les, stupidly, trying to recall his numberless intrigues, "I never saw her only here."

"I know! I know! I am speaking from the hypothesis of hope—hope for the Rosy Dreams of Youth to be fulfilled."

While old Rickard wove his fine-sounding phrases, Les unobtrusively poured himself a larger drink.

"In other words, my young friend, you are to have her. I give her to you. She is yours."

The ponderous mind of the unsubtle Les grappled with these monosyllables.

"Who is?" he queried, muddled, staring at the old man.

"The lovely young girl who accompanies me here."

Distrustful of this pale palaver, Les got to his feet and rested his broad, scrubbed paws on the table. He moved

his heavy jaw uneasily in his exaggerated collar. Class respect for the old alderman's wealth and name struggled futilely with his young, primitive contempt. His native Bohemian tongue colored the West Side argot of his clumsy speech:

"T'at's all right, Mr. Rickard. Su-ah, I know how you feel. Swell li'l broad and all t'at. I couldn't t'ink of robbing y' of 'er. Thanks all t' same. . . ."

His eyes wavered unhappily before the old man's shrewd stare. "Fine whiskey you got. . . . Have to be moving, I guess." He brightened as he heard the orchestra beckoning him with the provocative strains of the mama ballad. Beneath the swinging, insinuating red and yellow lamps he sauntered back among the cluttered tables, singing tentatively,

*"Monday night I sat alone,
Tuesday night you did not 'phone,
Wednesday night you made no call,
Thursday night the same old stall!"*

The alderman lit a cigarette with trembling hands. Les had disdained her—had looked pityingly at *him*, Rickard—had refused her!

Somebody must kill Les. You couldn't fool with Rickard that way. He, the dictator of the underworld, would have Les killed at once. He had told many people that he held the strings to a secret Tenderloin—now he would prove it. He gazed ahead of him, smoking nervously. . . .

His mind swarmed with memories, vague and sinister: names of stick-up men—dark alley-ways—West Side saloons—wops who did jobs—gangsters—but they were myths to him, myths, he knew sickly in his secret thought. Not one bound to do his bidding, not one who would answer his commands!

V

SATURDAY night at the Glow-worm. Little cloak and suit salesmen with sloping shoulders and prehensile faces, clamped to the same enameled, inscrut-

able girls, intent on the crooked stabbing of the sharp-elbowed jazz, intent on the crooked rhythm of grotesquely subtle steps. The old, white-moustached dogs, staring and grinning from their tables. The eager, befuddled faces of the visiting representatives from Los Angeles. The furtively bulging flasks under the soiled tablecloths, the scornful black-clad waiters, the red and yellow lamps, swinging, insinuating. . . . The confident stridency of Les, braying and strutting to a mangled melody. And Rickard, leaning across his table, leering happily into the crimson and white mask opposite.

Tonight the eyes of Les granted the pair no recognition. But Rickard chuckled—what weapon did youth have against his ripe wisdom and complex chains of power leading to the very heart of the sinister underworld? True that only a few nights ago he had been like a man awakening from a dream, his images disintegrating, the prop of illusion falling away from under the emotions it supported. True he had wondered then if his eyes had tricked him. Could it be that all men did not find her desirable? Was she not really charming, rare and beautiful?

Then with savage self-deception he had steadied that central pillar and made it bear him up. (Confidence, confidence that suggests, *suggests*—) *He* had found her desirable. She was, therefore, desirable. And Les had been lying! Les had lied because he feared a trap. Because he knew that Rickard held the secret strings to the underworld and feared the dread figures who would hasten to do their overlord's bidding.

And as he thought of this solution, the old man's whiskey-facile mind had been at peace. At once he believed more fiercely than before in his "daughter's" beauty and transcendent charm; he believed unswervingly in his magnificent self, the emperor of the tenderloin; and most of all he believed in Mildred's adoration of him, her omnipotent benefactor.

Gone were his transient visions of

renunciation and nobility. And tonight he was tickled immeasurably by the sight of Les, stupid, suspicious puppy, who must forever languish for this priceless queen—in vain!

Rickard felt his heart pulsate with pride and confidence and the joy of living. How the girl clung to him! How she yielded to his every whim!

"Call Parker—call Parker . . . Damn that waiter! He says I ordered blue points—didn't I order shrimps, little sweetheart? Of course I did!"

The girl stared dully into the mirror

of her vanity box. The flaring red and white image blurred before her stricken, unexpectant eyes. . . . That young, buoyant voice booming tirelessly:

*"You gotta keep mama FEELING RIGHT,
Or she won't be in when you call—"*

"These other fools can't afford whiskey. Look at 'em stare! Have a drink, little queen—have a drink! Another glass, waiter—damn that waiter! . . . If he'd only call Parker. Parker'll do anything for me. . . ."



The Great Woods

By Arthur Davison Ficke

I SAW the two in moonlight;
My gun became to me
Less than an oar to a sailor
Far inland from the sea.

Proud they emerged from darkness
And paused, and stamped the ground
With living hoofs, and snuffed the air,
Circling slowly around.

Till they confronted squarely
Each other's antlered head,
And suddenly they enlocked, and shook,—
Released, and almost fled—

Then wheeled again, more sinister,
For the blind lunge and twist. . . .
Beyond them, I could dimly see,
Through the thin veil of mist,

The doe they fought for, placidly
Regarding their slow fight,
Indifferent what the end should be,
Chewing leaves in the night.

The shadows swayed; another stag
Approached her like a fawn.
He sniffed; she followed, and was lost.
The rivals battled on.

The Beautiful Hudson

By Charles G. Shaw

THE charms of the Loire, of the Thames, of the Rhine, of the Dneiper, of the Amazon I do not doubt. Likewise do I concede the delights of the Danube, of the Volga, of the Tiber, of the Nile. Yet in all this terrestrial sphere I know of no river more ravishing than the noble stream that flows from Albany to the lower end of Manhattan. With what zest do I recall my latest and loveliest view of it!

Having boarded a vessel at Poughkeepsie, and secured sedentary repose of singular comfort in the for'ard section of the craft, I lit a donated Amatista and, a few minutes later, was gliding down the glorious course. On either side rose gently sloping hills, splashed with a variegated color of glowing woodland; while a scarlet sun hung low in the cloudless sky. Glancing along the unbroken skyline, I noted, to my left, that a young woman had seated herself in the chair next to mine. In the distance lay the city of Newburgh, nestled in its bed of beauty, suggesting some rare gem in a superb setting. The young woman, I observed, possessed an abundance of golden hair and large, lustrous, brown eyes. Her lips were like a Cupid's bow, and her snowy teeth glistened in the sunlight. Here and there a diminutive island, rich with foliage, broke the expanse of the resplendent river.

Yes, she was a very pretty young woman with a complexion that recalled a peach in full bloom. The lashes of her eyes were long and dark, and her dainty throat seemed carved from flawless ivory. Below Cornwall Landing loomed the Highlands in dignified loftiness and, further on, West Point, the former seat of the colonial Fort Putnam.

Her hands were small and delicate, with perfectly moulded fingers, and her ankles were slim and shapely. I thought that I detected the ripple of a smile about her lips. On the eastern side arose huge Paleozoic rocks, and the tidy hamlet of Haverstraw lay opposite: below were Tarrytown and Tappin Bay. Surely never before had I glimpsed a creature half as comely as this beauteous one whose loveliness seemed to radiate about her. There was perfection in her every line; there was the grace of an indescribable splendor.

Under the guise of seeking shelter from the wind, I edged my chair slightly nearer hers. Soon the Palisades in all their grandeur sprang into sight. For the fraction of a second she glanced in my direction, and her little lace handkerchief fell to the deck. I rose and picked it up. . . .

To me the Hudson is far and away the most enchanting of all the rivers in the world.



The Camellia

By Nancy Hoyt

I

THE Marchesa pushed the narrow glass from her and stared rather drearily over the white sunburned space of the terrace. A striped umbrella threw a narrowed circle of shade over the little table where she sat half in a shadow, not much cooler than the blazing sun around it. She looked about for a match and motioned to a waiter leaning against the apricot-colored wall of the villa. He moved over and lit her cigarette, commenting politely on the extravagant heat of the day.

She ordered another ice, thinking with delicate greediness of the cool bitterness of frozen black coffee, strong and unsweetened, topped by a small dab of vanilla-flavored whipped cream. It was a perfect combination and could not possibly contain anything fattening. Not that she, the Marchesa, would need to worry about becoming even a little fat, but she wished to preserve in their original effect the interesting pallor, the porcelain fragility and languor with which she had first drooped gracefully around the high-ceilinged rooms of her husband's palazzo.

Her large mauve-lidded eyes rested wearily on the tip of her cigarette and she sighed slowly. A thrilling picture—the Marchesa in thin lemon-colored linen and a broad brimmed black hat, sighing slowly. Two young American college girls, warm and interested in everything, churches, cabmen, beggars and all they thought

made up local color, watched her eagerly. Here was an Italian great lady, probably one descended from those mediæval families they had just studied in the History of Art. Look at that black hair and shadowed eyes—of course she was Italian. Their moist faces beamed at her.

Mathilde (the Marchesa's Christian name had once been Matilda, but the change was easy) felt pleased at even these dull young women's admiration. She forgot that they might very possibly come from the same Ohio town that she was born in, and, lighting another cigarette, she looked coldly over their heads.

Rome in June was intolerable, but the Villino outside Siena was worse. It was unbelievably boring and deadly dull there. The bathroom recently added, Lorenzo's one concession to an American wife, was regarded as a devilish innovation by the servants. The Marchesa bathed twice a day in that infernal machine, the long white bath tub. What else was there to do there, but take baths?

Lorenzo considered her tiresome, but then he expected so much in the way of amusement. He was an ugly but animated young man, who spent most of his money on horses and dashed with incredible agility from one energetic enterprise to another. At first Mathilde, a panting and distracted creature, had attempted to keep up with him, but now, thank heaven, he left her alone and she dropped back to a pleasant monotony

of laziness. "When in Rome—," what a ridiculous quotation, for how could one exist doing the things the Romans did? Life here was like the granita, a very small dab of sweetened whipped cream and then bitter coffee ice, and soon even that disappeared and left one an empty glass.

There were, of course, a lot of things she might try. One might go to Paris and buy clothes, but that was a lot of trouble; or less far, to the hairdresser's on the Via Venezia—only she didn't need a manicure and it was a tiresome drive. Then slowly she remembered that her young Russian, the refugee Count, was coming to tea with her. They could have it in the great cool sala on the second floor; the idea was pleasant and involved no effort beyond pouring the tea. And he could play to her, "only nothing noisy, Michael dear, because it is *so* warm."

The Marchesa, a little less wearily, got up and walked toward her car. On the last of the terrace steps she stopped and posed for a minute as if lost in tragic thought.

The young American from the Embassy turned to his companion, an Italian not quite so young.

"She is certainly the most interesting looking woman in Rome," he said enthusiastically.

"And quite the dullest," the Italian answered.

"Nineteen thirteen and fourteen," he began, "were the gayest years ever seen in Rome, but perhaps they only seemed so to me, for I was young then—you must have been a small boy—and I thought them unparalleled and quite perfect. The women! They were beautiful beyond words. The ladies of the diplomatic corps were all lovely and each very different, though of course one never knew to which nation the lady belonged, for though her husband's name might be Russian one had to take care not to offend the patriotic feelings of his foreign wife. I remem-

ber in one important embassy there were wives of five different nations. The lovely Mathilde was then a bride, just married into an old Roman family, twenty-two or three perhaps, and recently arrived from Como, where the wedding had been. She was an American, you know, and we were all mad to meet her, but particularly Felipe de Goncalves, a most romantic young man, attached to one of the large South American embassies. He saw her first at the Opera one night, as he was walking up through the stalls to smoke a cigarette outside. Glancing up to the second row of boxes he suddenly noticed the Marchesa all in white, looking languidly over the velvet edge of the loge. I assure you, this unfortunate Felipe spent the evening in a trance. It is not that she was so extraordinarily beautiful. Personally, I could name lots of women just as pretty, but he, you must remember, was a very intense young man. For him no blondes; even the Duchess's famous fiery hair left him cold. You see, he had made a definite figure in his imagination, a complete pictured ideal, and suddenly this lady had appeared and perfectly fitted into and matched this heretofore impossible dream."

The Italian extinguished his cigarette slowly and went on.

"Of course, when Felipe had been imagining a lady he had not only endowed her with the only kind of looks he admired but with many other things, wit, a great deal of charm, vivacity and what he called 'an almost masculine intelligence.' What is harder to understand is why God did not present Mathilde with these various characteristics and make a really good job of it. But He didn't.

"That winter she went to very few balls, though it was a season of parties—mad costume balls with ladies driving live leopards—all sorts of extravagances. But Lorenzo—he's a very nice fellow, by the way—was just married and supposedly very

jealous. So they would dance a few times only, and then he would take her home early. They never seemed to talk to each other but we all thought that was because Lorenzo, poor chap, was less brilliant than his glorious, dark-eyed wife. Felipe seemed in a very bad position; he could not seem to manage to be presented to his lady and there was left to him only those few chance meetings at the theatre or the opera. I remember he sent her camellias all the time, of course, with no card, but he was sure she would know who sent them. Then one evening in spring, there was a dinner someone gave at a place in the Campagna. A warm evening—someone playing the piano inside and the loggias spangled with fireflies and a few flickering candles. Felipe was there, and there, oh breath-taking wonder, was the Marchesa, looking slimmer, paler and more beautifully robed in her favorite white than ever. They were introduced by the hostess, who disappeared inside to arrange something and left them standing together, looking over that magnificent vista toward the city.

"That I should meet you tonight!" he said, almost speechless with emotion.

"It is a nice night, isn't it," she answered in her flat, slightly nasal voice. But he didn't notice the voice. He only remembered that they were alone for the first time and he caught the hand that was pulling at one of the climbing roses, and held it for a moment.

"Your hand, your beautiful hand, that I have so many times seen holding a fan or a programme and could not touch it." He bent down and kissed her long fingers.

"She said, 'You like my hand? There's an awfully nice manicure I go to at Luigi's. I have an appointment there tomorrow but I don't think I really need one. I might have a marcel, though. They do it awfully nicely there.' And she turned

her lovely empty eyes to him.

"Felipe could not believe this heavenly night was to be wasted. Her conversation must surely be only a blind that covered real intelligence and emotion.

"Those flowers," he said huskily, 'those camellias I sent, when you wore them I thought I would die of happiness.' She looked slightly surprised.

"Oh, did you send them?" she said. 'Camellias are nice, only they don't smell, do they?'

"He suddenly understood. This beautiful lady, this divine-looking creature was stupid. In that moment, he afterward told me, he felt the most terrible sadness and despair.

"No," he answered, 'they do not smell.'

"That is why an agonized young man left the party very suddenly and hurried into Rome, why Felipe de Goncalves begged for and got an exchange to another country, and also why for several years he would grumble against the Americans and say 'American women are flowers with no perfume.' However he married one when he was in Washington a few years later. And that, I think, accounts for Felipe."

"And the Marchesa?" asked the young American with unabated interest.

"The Marchesa," said the Italian, smiling across the table, "for the Marchesa there will always be plenty of new young men of that impressionable age that we were then, who will perennially find her thrilling."

"I wonder," said the American, a little sheepishly, "if you would introduce me to her."

"Young men," replied the Italian, throwing his eyes to heaven, "run so beautifully true to form. Yes, certainly, I will present you."

II

THE Marchesa gently stirred the

rose-pink mixture in her glass. The young American across the table followed her motions with an adoring eye. Young men seemed to make a habit of having adoring eyes when she was around.

"I love ice-cream sodas," she said pensively. It had been hard to make the young man meet her here on the top of Old England. He wanted to go somewhere romantic and said a department store was a horrible place for a rendezvous. But she had to get some gloves there, and besides, it was the only place in Rome one could get really good American sodas. How they brought back her youth in the Ohio small town! But she did not want to remember her youth, the passion for the sodas was the last relic of it.

"Is that why you wanted to meet

me in this beastly place?" he said.

"My dear, of course not," she answered, laying two suède-covered fingers on his arm, "only one *must* be discreet—my husband, you know."

He was completely won over; it never occurred to him that Lorenzo, always the most amiable of men, left Mathilde to do just as she pleased.

"Do please forgive me," he said contritely. "I hate being discreet. Mathilde, dearest, couldn't you, wouldn't you stop this discretion and—oh let's get out of this place, out of Rome now, right away."

She smiled. "It would be nice, wouldn't it? But—" she sighed very slowly and looked at her little wrist-watch. "I'm afraid I must, really must, go to Luigi's now. I have an appointment for a manicure at five."



Let Not Forever

By A. Newberry Choyce

LET not forever any lover bring
His love unto this place where I brought mine,
Lest some stark mute unmentionable thing
Confront him then, some harsh forboding sign.

These three gaunt trees . . . this coarsely lovely grass
That envious fringes the wheat-ocean waves. . . .
And this thin cackling river . . . let none pass!
Here lies Lost Faith. Men do not walk on graves.



IT is annoying to have a bad reputation, but no woman ever falls in love with a man she could trust under any circumstances.



Marginal Notes

By Alfred Polgar

[Translated by Eva Goldbeck]

I

THE good poet: To me a God gave power to tell of what I suffer.

The good reader: To me a God gave power to suffer what you tell.

II

ONE'S relationship to one's beloved exists under constant pressure of a twofold fear: the fear that it may end and the fear that it may continue.

III

ONE may regard the world and mankind with the utmost cynicism, look upon life as a ruthless race in which the skilful and strong will always be ahead and the clumsy and weak behind, and yet be aware that about one thing there can be no difference among honorable lovers of sport: that the start ought to be the same for all.

IV

IN all piously instructive stories those who deny God are humbled by Him until at last they believe in Him. Misery, sorrow, and ruin break their insolence. Simply through this practice God's cause grows suspicious. He has to make His creatures defenseless before He can vanquish them. No legend tells of a *partie egale* that He has won.

V

FOR ten years these two have sat, hours every day, all alone in the cof-

fee shop. It is a good marriage? No, it is a good coffee shop.

VI

THE wise man was right a thousand times over when he said: After I have worked at something I always regret the beautiful wasted time.

VII

IN the steam-heated atmosphere of school rooms, offices, homes, gruffness easily deteriorates into friendliness. Most friendships are degenerated indifference.

VIII

THE superior human being uses the energy of his outer life to create a place and freedom for his inner life. It is his particular tragi-comedy that for the support of this purposive exertion of all the forces of his outer life he is compelled to draw increasingly on those of his inner life. So he wastes what he wishes to save, uses up what he wishes to preserve, and when at last a place and freedom are won there is no longer anything in him that can make use of them. The man who does not have to borrow anything from his inner life for the protection of that life is called a genius. The one who maintains about fifty per cent of it is called a talent. He who loses his whole inner life to keep it—that sorry fool I will, with compassionate heart, call brother.

IX

It is curious that the variabilities of life promote so much enmity

among people; and the compulsion of death, identical for all, so little solidarity.

X

THERE is no escape from woman. Either she has power over you and therefore ability to make you suffer—in which case she will, of course, use it—or she hasn't it; then she will become melancholy and unhappy over her lack of power, and you, in order not to suffer from her melancholia, will have to attempt craftily to endow her with power over you, that is, with ability to make you suffer. Try to find a way out of the circle!

XI

OUR "unbridled" imagination still tugs at a leash. We are never able, even in our thoughts, to annul real-

ity. Our angels have wings, whereby, although on the one hand they become "supernatural," on the other they fall within the laws of physics. Our ghosts wander through walls, but for sight they have eyes, and for touch hands, as is proper anatomically; and if they carry their heads in their arms, they still (respecting gravity) carry them, so that they do not fall to the ground. The all-powerful magician of the fairy tale is all-powerful. Nevertheless he wears heavy boots and woolen gloves so that the snow shall not freeze off his toes and fingers. Angels, as I say, have wings. That means that we can suppose a miracle only by simultaneously denying it. We can name the inexplicable only by explaining it in the same breath. Every successful demonstration of the supernatural instantly becomes its own contradiction.



Devotion

By John Torcross

THE widow knelt at the grave and wept and wept.

Never again would she behold his dear face, and the thought brought forth a renewed onslaught of tears.

She placed a little wreath of violets on the headstone, dried her eyes, and departed.

What a darling he was!

And what a beast her husband had been!



MARRIAGE is a device for giving a man's sweetheart of today an advantage over his sweetheart of tomorrow.



Black Magic

By Lewis Jason

I

SHE was a divorcée; a widow by choice, not by chance; and she had me outdistanced to the grave by fifteen years at least. I was in my early twenties when I met her. She became interested in me through some writing I had done for a magazine she was sponsoring, a local, ponderously arty affair. As she had a considerable reputation among the intellectuals, it was considered no small honor to be one of her literary protégés. So I was flattered and fluttered when I received an invitation to one of her evenings.

I remember her as I saw her that evening for the first time; a short, compact woman, well fleshed but not fat. She had on a loose gown which she had to pull up out of the way of her feet when she walked—a sort of negligée with overtones of Gloria Swanson. On her it looked like a curtain drawn across an empty stage, as someone remarked to me later. What good looks she may have had—she could never have been a strikingly handsome woman—had been well obliterated by the years. Her face had begun to sag in spots and her complexion was beyond cosmetics. Her hair had survived the widespread calamity, or, at least, she did it up artfully enough to conceal any great ravages. The only remarkable thing about her was her eyes. They were dark and alive and fine.

She asked me to come to see her again and in a short time I became one of her young men; much against my will, for I soon sounded her depth so far as the arts were concerned.

"Don't you think that Shaw is too much of a mountebank?" she would begin and I would wait with bated breath for more. But that is as far as she would ever get. I would begin a discussion of Cézanne only to have her come at me with:

"Do you read George Moore? I always keep a set of him by my bed."

Then, before I could get her critical estimate of him, she would have me safely side-tracked on Vachel Lindsay. Two weeks of this critical hide-and-seek were enough for me. Her reactions to literature and art didn't rise above her vertebrae, and I would have dropped her, but she insisted upon seeing me every day.

For a time our conversations must have been the most platitudinous and dull on record. I can't remember a thing we talked about, for, failing the arts, we had nothing in common. Then one afternoon, in a moment of divine insight—I think I had drunk too much *vin rouge* the night before—I discovered her true intellectual and emotional *milieu* and our intimacy began.

We were discussing the peccadillos of a friend, a young writer who was leaping the hurdles rather publicly at that time and getting himself talked about—a matter of no slight moment where everyone knew everyone else. As she knew that I was rather intimate with him, she must have guessed that I knew a great deal more than I was telling her. A hint or two of mine caused her to become very interested. She begged me for details and it was then that I realized that scandal was her delight. Abandoning my attitude of in-

difference toward such unspiritual manifestations, I told her a deal more than anyone ever should tell a woman.

"I can't think how he can be so sordid about it," she said, leaning toward me with more animation than she had shown since I had known her, "and with a woman forty years old! You know I'm not prudish, but I do think there is something wrong about an affair of that sort."

"Not immoral, but inartistic," I replied, and began boldly to state a theory I had evolved in regard to the complex comedy of the sexes. I had only just achieved disenchantment and still had a bit of a sentimental hang-over. I must have been trying to compensate for my lost chivalric ideals, for this theory, as I recall it, had something to do with a natural coming together, a free and whole-hearted union, but always beautiful. I didn't get far along with it, as she interrupted my thought by saying:

"I wonder if you have ever been very much in love, Mr. Meadows."

And it was then that I became conscious of her annoying habit of dragging in personalities, annoying to me, at least, since I rather prided myself on my impersonal austerity. But I capitulated, at first unwillingly. I was a skittish colt. I began to look out for scandalous news to feed her appetite; I even condescended to talk about myself. The latter I found took little effort. Some of our conversations must have been rather extravagant. I remember she used to say:

"We don't care what we talk about, do we?" But she seemed quite pleased and satisfied.

That Autumn we took long rides in her motor and she told me about her own life.

"My husband," she said "simply took me by force. I didn't want to marry him, but he was so overpowering! We were wonderful companions. Most unusual in married couples, don't you think? We had some great moments and some terrible ones. All that leaves me cold now. I could never go back

to him, knowing what I do of his affairs with other women. He was drunk when he slipped the first time. He told me all about it quite frankly afterward. It was horrible at the time, but I don't think I would ever have insisted on a divorce if he hadn't become so openly entangled with that creature he is with now. I had to save my face."

She told me of a man who had been in love with her for years.

"He is married now, but he still writes me the most violent letters. He asked me whether he ought to marry. He was mad about me but I couldn't go through with it all again."

So her thoughts continually fluttered.

In my innocence I respected her reputation as the most worthy of women. I felt a pleasant sense of freedom from the restraint that had been imposed on my tongue by too Puritanical forebears. If I thought about her attitude at all, I thought of it as enlightened. However, I must have been aware that she felt a bit devilish. Yet perhaps what gave me the greatest feeling of assurance and confidence in her integrity was the fact that she most heartily abused anyone who transgressed.

But in the end my last illusions, my self-confidence and my youthful conceit were shattered beyond repair.

II

It was Spring. We had driven down to the sea one lovely night. The half-moon which hung in the west cut a silver path out over the waves. That ageless, melancholy boom, often celebrated by poets, beat up to us incessantly from the cliff. Down the coast the lights from a wharf sent long undulating streamers across the water. It was a night for lovers and madmen.

"Last New Year's Eve Bill Jones and I drove out here," she told me. "You know Bill is married and has two children, but his wife was away and I was driving him home after a party. When twelve o'clock came, I turned to him

and said, 'Happy New Year, Bill.' He tried to kiss me. I think he had been drinking too much. It disgusted me with him."

I felt pleasantly superior to Bill, and was shocked when I became aware that she was snuggling closer and closer to me. Finally she put her head on my shoulder, so I gallantly put my arm around her to make her more comfortable. After she had looked up at me enquiringly a time or two, it dawned on me that she wanted me to do what Bill Jones had tried to do. I was overwhelmed, but I have always been too obliging, too soft-hearted.

"Maybe she just wants to resurrect a few harmless memories," I thought, so I summoned up all the courage I could, closed my eyes and conjured up a vision of a girl I was very desirous of kissing at that time, and then kissed her.

"You've wanted to hug me before, haven't you?" she asked, but my gallantry was taxed to the limit, I could not reply. I had to kiss her again; I could lie with my lips, but I couldn't lie with my tongue. After what seemed an interminable length of time she released me. I could do nothing but look morosely out over the water, while she studied my face, trying, I guess, to see how I had taken it.

"I guess it was too much moonlight and the propinquity," she said at last. I seized upon that as an opportunity to go home.

At her house she suggested a glass or two, to which I assented eagerly; I had never felt more in the need of a stimulant. As we sat there she caressed me with her eyes, and in mine she

began to take on an artificial color and flavor.

I didn't see her for a week after that. I barricaded myself in my rooms, refused to answer the telephone or the door-bell and lost myself in some work I had been planning. On Sunday, however, I went for a walk. She must have been hovering near, for she overtook me in a minute.

"Ah! this has been a terrible week for me," she began.

"And for me," I said coldly.

"I've wanted to talk to you. Where have you been all week?" and as I didn't answer, "Don't you think we ought to forget about the other night?"

"It is the only thing we can do," I replied and looked stubbornly at my boots.

Then she fell to talking about a new magazine she had just seen. When we arrived at her home, she asked me in, with the promise of a glass of Scotch. After a glass or two, my sullenness dropped away, but I kept my head clear.

"Ah! Vincent, it's good to see you again. Let's go for a drive tonight!"

III

I NEVER saw her again.

Had she planned this all out months ahead? Did she keep me concentrated on romance and love news for a purpose? Was this affair with me just one of many? (There was always a number of young fellows buzzing around her.) Or was she simply a stupid woman who had been thinking too long about her own desolation and let herself be carried away by a sudden emotion? I'm damned if I know!



Letters

By Hallie Schaffner

MISS MAY sat alone as usual, in the shabby dining-room of the little Swiss hotel. Miss May didn't much mind being alone—she had grown too used to it to take it other than as a simple fact of nature. Only when she heard laughter, or when she saw an occasional gay group amusing themselves over nothing at all, did her own solitude strike her. For a score of years Miss May—prim, English and precise—she had been as faded at twenty as she was at forty—had benefited by a small annuity to the extent of a life spent in dreary pensions or third-rate continental hotels. Her days were like the table d'hôte—not unpleasant but without flavor. She found her interest in the pursuit of climate or scenery, and in mild, incessant complaints addressed to waiters or to the *femme de chambre*—and seldom heeded by them. They had things to do beside listening to a spinster!

But today she felt a distinct elation as she took her place at the small table. It was indeed in the nature of a triumph. For the past month she had complained, gently, persistently, about the place assigned her—draughty, too near the entrance, and away from the sunshine. Now, at last, it had been changed! Sometimes it took many complaints and again the waiter was inclined to be sympathetic, more so in the dull season when small tips were appreciated. It seemed to Miss May that by some curious arrangement of destiny she never arrived anywhere in season. Never, no matter where she traveled!

Always there were present the same sort of dull, munching people, in the same drab dining-rooms—the same curates, so like her poor dear father, and their flat pinched-in daughters, so like herself. Pale faces of wax, thin frames in clothes that had that air of genteel rust she so despised, something about them of bland decay, as if already a slight mysterious odor from the grave clung to their angular bodies. Usually they came in family groups, a bony brother with a stoop or a hunch, and plaintive sisters with a twitch or a cough. Over all hung the temperate severity of a clerical damp.

Miss May preferred even her own society—and her letters. She hardly ever received letters, but she was never without a packet of some she had saved—at her meals. They lay beside her plate now, a delightful little bunch, and between courses she would make a pretense of reading them again and again. It was a new kind of solitaire without any rules, save her own thoughts. At first she had started the habit for lack of anything better and perhaps lest others might feel sorry for her—always alone. Now, in some strange way, letters had changed places with people. Real and alive they had grown to her—pale gray, light blue, black and white friends. She loved their creased, tinted faces.

She was happy that her complaints had taken effect. Her table—just where she wanted it, in the alcove made by the bay windows, with the sunlight at her shoulder—a bright column of dancing particles slanting in between draperies of dark red

plush. Here she could watch the guests more easily as they appeared in the doorway. A few families interested her, above all, the ones with children. The Spanish family, for instance, with those dark little girls, like small vivid butterflies in their dresses of blue, yellow and rose, absurdly short. Once a baby had been born in a hotel where she had stayed, and someone had asked her to hold the queer little thing. It quite frightened her and she gave it back at once, but she could remember still the funny feel to it.

She wondered, now, if the Admiral would observe that her place had been changed. Such a fascinating man, the Admiral! He was the only man who took the trouble to chat with her, a few words now and then—about the tennis tournament, or the weather, anything—in his nice, easy manner. He had the magic of making the dulllest topics sound new and interesting. And he never noticed her stupid hesitation either. From now on he would have to pass by her table! A little flush crept into her cheeks at the thought, while she unfolded another letter from its habitual crease. "You lucky person!—to get so much mail," the Admiral had a way of saying. If he only knew!

He never got any, poor man. Once, the afternoon that he had invited her for tea, she had almost told him of her little ruse. Almost—just to comfort him. But luckily she had caught herself in time. What would he have thought of such a ridiculous game? Not that it could matter any, in the long run, for eventually there would be for each of them more new Palace Hotels or Pensions Beau-Sites. But fancy a confession about letters that were ages old! Her memory slid away uneasily from the dangerous subject to pause a while at the remembrance of the delightful way in which he thanked her that time for a charming tea. He might ask her again in a fortnight . . . perhaps.

The Widow appeared in the doorway—a little late, as usual, with that breathless appeal about her which made it seem as though she had torn herself away from something terribly important just to take a morsel of lunch. Then she would dart away again, with that same mysterious air, as if her life was far beyond the general dull routine. Even the Admiral had given in to her charms—a secret charm that sprang from some mysterious source, vivid and intense. She waved to the Admiral, a gay, mock salute.

Miss May folded her napkin with a vicious crease. She would not wait for the Admiral to pass by her table. Not today! She would get away from the sight of that silly, fair little thing, with her chains and her bangles and her profusion of agate hearts. No wonder that the curates and their families raised their eyebrows when she tripped by, with her tinkling charms, her tinkle-tinkle laughter. Miss May collected her letters and left the room, pity for the Admiral a ferment within her.

Later, after she had glanced at the new illustrated weeklies in the files, she ran into them by accident, on her way to the lift. It was not possible to evade them, nor to avoid an instant's exchange of talk. "Ah-a, more letters,"—the Admiral beamed. Miss May nodded. "Only a few today—several from home," she tried to speak casually. "Aren't you fortunate!" the Widow tinkled sweetly, her round blue gaze upon the envelopes that Miss May held in the hand that clutched the door knob. Miss May trembled, but some strange force kept her from dropping the letters, kept her bony grasp on the knob, within the range of those clear penetrating eyes, there in the bright sunshine.

Miserably she knew, in the depths of her guilty, frightened heart, that the Widow had read the postmarks—of several at least—and knew—as everyone was sure to know by tea

time—that letters did not arrive months after their postmarks. Her little game was over.

She broke away after several instants of eternity, somehow, and went to her room. It wasn't so much that she minded the Widow know-

ing about her deceit, nor their fellow guests. But at the thought of the Admiral. . . . Miss May stopped and could not go on. When she had again collected herself, she went to her writing portfolio, took out her *Kursbuch* and began looking up trains.



Dialogue in a Death-House

By Alfred Polgar

“**W**HAT would you like for supper?” the warden asked of the poor prisoner who was to die on the gallows the next morning. “You may eat and drink whatever and as much as you want.”

“Too bad!” said the prisoner. “Too bad! If you had asked me that three months ago, the robbery and murder would not have happened.”



Paste

By Jay Jarrod

THE famous moving picture star alighted from his huge limousine, stalked up the marble steps of his mansion and passed through the gold-plated door.

Arriving at his room, the great man took a bath and proceeded to make himself up to look like a gentleman.



MARRIAGE is a scheme for inflating the currency of love. It increases the number of kisses, but decreases their purchasing power.



The Black Cap

By Guy Gilpatric

DURING the flurry of applause, the team of Hercules, Juno and Apollon strutted to the footlights, bowing and smirking in the manner of all acrobats. The orchestra leader tapped for the silence for the finale.

There was much shuffling of feet in resin, and wiping of hands with handkerchiefs. With majestic deliberation, Monsieur Hercules adjusted the padded leather cap on his head, tightening, loosening, then tightening again, the straps that went under his chin. He puffed out his red jowls, shook his head, jammed the cap further down over his ears, and scowled at the audience. Then he pursed his lips to make his mustache bristle, twisted his great bull neck, and scowled at his wife and Pierre—"Juno" and "Apollon" respectively.

They had better be careful, those two—particularly Madame! He hadn't married her to be made a fool of by any young tumbler like Pierre—a man who weighed but sixty kilos, and was only good for catching on the top of one's head!

As his wife minced across the stage, he saw a look that vaguely troubled him flash through her stage smile. Very well—after the act he would have something to say to her, and he would make it more memorable with the strap from the wardrobe trunk. As for Pierre—bah!—with Pierre he would break up the dressing-room furniture. . . .

The cap was adjusted. With a gesture in the grand manner, he waved the others to their places. Conscious of his great muscular bulk exposed by

his imitation leopard skin tunic, he took his place at the left of the stage.

Pierre climbed very deliberately up the glistening nickel-plated ladder which almost touched the top of the proscenium at the right. Madame, who took no active part in the big thriller, bustled about the stage with feigned nervousness and little shrill admonitions to be careful.

Pierre reached the platform at the top of the ladder. He stood poised, with his toes curled over its edge. Hercules braced himself—hunched up his shoulders until his great neck was buried in knots of muscle.

There was dead silence. Then Madame nodded to the orchestra leader, the trap drum snarled, Hercules barked "Allez!", and Pierre, turning somersaults in space, came hurtling down straight for his mark—the padded cap.

He landed with both feet squarely on it. As usual, Hercules recoiled under the impact, ran a few steps and threw his head from side to side, to balance his burden. But instead of carrying Pierre toward the footlights to receive the applause and final fanfare, he twitched violently, opened his mouth, and fell flat on his face—Pierre sprawling on all fours in front of him.

Madame screamed. So did several women in the audience.

"It was a slip," said some. "He is not hurt."

But Hercules did not move. As the curtain fell, the audience saw the legs of the stage hands who were carrying him off, and heard the

time—that letters did not arrive months after their postmarks. Her little game was over.

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But Hercules did not move. As the curtain fell, the audience saw the legs of the stage hands who were carrying him off, and heard the

hysterical voice of Madame. . . .

They lugged the giant to his dressing room, his head lolling about like a knot on the end of a wet towel.

"He is dead," said the doctor. "Something snapped in his brain—some tiny nerve or blood vessel, no doubt. But it was enough—he is finished. . . ."

The doctor went away. Neither he nor anyone else had seen the little pin hole and the single bead of blood which were hidden by Hercules' mass of hair. And no one thought to look into the black cap—from the felt padding of which Madame's deft fingers had already removed the long, slim carpet tack.



Love Story

By Paul Eldridge

STEPHEN and Virginia loved with a tumultuous love. They said to each other:

"Dearest, our love must not die like the loves of other people. It must not wither and taste acrid like the dull affection of married couples. It must live forever! It must always be as tumultuous as it is at this moment!"

Being sophisticated, they continued:

"The average love is positively dead at the end of two years; love like ours may at most last four."

They sighed very deeply, for knowledge is painful even to the most sophisticated.

"We must outwit Time, beloved!" they exclaimed. "Thus instead of ex-

hausting our passion in four years by being constantly together, as other lovers are, we may lengthen the period to seven times four, by seeing each other only once a week! For six days we shall yearn, and the seventh we shall be as new lovers. Our hands shall tremble as now, our mouths shall find the same rapturous joy!"

They wept bitterly at this voluntary exile. . . .

* * *

Stephen and Virginia were quite lonesome for six days every week. At the end of forty-six weeks Stephen found Ellen to console him. Ten weeks later Virginia found Ivan.



MOST mothers-in-law could learn an awful lot from a wheel-shy wagon on a car track.



WHEN a man gives a woman all he has, it proves one thing: That he hasn't much.



The Love Affairs of Mrs. Kate Deckle

By Victor Thaddeus

I

AFTER her husband died Mrs. Deckle sold the semi-detached house in Mason Street, and went to live in the two rooms over the fruit market.

Morning and evening she prayed to God to watch over her affairs. She was afraid that some calamity would come and leave her destitute. Often at night she would lean out over the empty street, afraid of the darkness and the silence. Her lips moved in prayer.

"Lord, have mercy!" she prayed.

She was a large, emotional woman. Her dark hair always presented a slightly dishevelled appearance that was not unattractive. Her pulse could be seen beating in her throat. Her hands moved in a languid, groping manner. Before and after marrying Mr. Deckle she had engaged in other love affairs.

Out walking with Hal Johnson when she was fifteen and he twenty, she had flung her arms around his neck and kissed him. Hal was married and the proprietor of a drug store now. Her last lover was a traveling salesman, whom she had met at the county fair when Mr. Deckle was confined to his bed and whose ruddy complexion had attracted her when she noticed him standing in front of the shooting gallery.

Mr. Deckle had been seriously ill for a year before dying. Then, one morning, he had died suddenly while his wife was ironing a sheet in the kitchen.

When Mrs. Deckle realized that she was alone in the world, she felt the necessity for caution. She decided to

dismiss the salesman from her thoughts, since she knew that he was married. She bought a large Bible, kept it on the table beside her bed, and read chapters at random before going to sleep.

Two months after Mr. Deckle's death the salesman, who lived in Wilkes-Barre, was in town and came to see her. She allowed him to take her to a show, but declined his invitation to go to supper with him afterward, and repelled his advances on the way home.

The salesman's name was Sam Smith. He sold barbers' supplies. He had introduced himself to Mrs. Deckle under the pseudonym of Dan Warfield. He was short, and robust, with amused blue eyes; he always made his plans well ahead of time, and worried about nothing. Hat in hand, when he left her, he said good night gravely, and walked away; and when the train pulled out of Wilburville an hour later he was thinking of the next town.

Upstairs, over the fruit market, Mrs. Deckle stood quite still, hoping to hear steps, and the salesman's voice, "Open the door, Kate!" When no sound came she was furious with herself for having wished this. She locked the door, and lit the gas. She let down her hair with fingers that moved quickly and erratically at the end of languorous arms. She knelt and prayed.

II

THERE was a knock on the door. She half-turned her face, and remained kneeling a moment. Then she rose and went to open it, glad that Dan had come

back, and knowing that she could talk to him calmly as a friend now that she had prayed. But it was Hal Johnson who had knocked. He came in and sat down.

He was tall, with small hands, and a broad, smooth face in which burnt the stub of a cigar. He talked about Mr. Deckle—death. He wondered where folks went to when they died. He touched her hair. He reminded her of the night when she had first kissed him twenty years ago; how they had walked through a cornfield to a barn. A turtle had scared her. Then the farm dog had barked and they had both been scared.

Now and again as Hal Johnson talked he threw back his head and blew smoke at the ceiling, and his eyes moved slowly from side to side.

Suddenly he parted her hair at the nape and, pressing it against his cheeks, kissed her on the neck. Then he kissed her lips, saying with a short laugh, "I guess I've never quit loving you, Kate!"

Mrs. Deckle fell on her knees beside the bed and began to pray.

Hal Johnson had not expected this, and it embarrassed him. He stood looking down at her back. Kate was well-proportioned, childless—had retained much of the resiliency of youth. The abandon of her position aroused his anger against this God to whom she was stretching her arms when his were waiting to hold her.

"Haven't you got the fear of God, Hal?" asked Mrs. Deckle, without turning her face.

"Have you got religion, Kate?" stuttered Hal.

He went out, slamming the door behind him, furious that she should be talking of this subject now. Mrs. Deckle felt the floor shake under her knees, heard his feet on the pavement. She ran to the window. In the street-lamp on the corner she saw as through an open casement the barn and the cornfield. A little dizzy, she covered her eyes. When she uncovered them a street car had taken Hal Johnson away.

It was Mr. Deckle's death, she realized, as she stood alone at the window,

that had given her a soul and put the fear of God into it.

He had died very suddenly indeed. He had been alive when she left the room wondering how much longer it would be her duty to nurse life in that emaciated body. In the kitchen the irons were hot. As she was fastening the holder to one, the cleaner's man came for her suit, the one Dan had spilled root beer on at the county fair. She went upstairs. She laid the coat on the bed to examine it more carefully, and saw that her husband was dead. And she had been staggered by a conception of the omnipotence of the power that had spirited him away.

Mr. Deckle had owned a hardware business next to the fruit market building, which he had bought with the idea of expanding his store some day. When his lung disease passed into the acute stage he had sold the store for cash, holding the fruit market as an investment. Often, after Mrs. Deckle moved into the rooms upstairs, she was panic-stricken at the thought that this power might at any moment bring about the failure of her bank, wreck her health, burn down the fruit market building, or induce her to rush out with a hatchet and murder a passerby. But one day hope and understanding had burst through the darkness.

God was the omnipotent power. It was only God up there. It was God who had taken Tom away. Only God. God, whom she must fear, and who would then protect her. God, to whom she must pray. She fell, sobbing, to her knees.

"Lord, have mercy! O Lord, have mercy! Have mercy on my soul!"

But tonight, after she had sent the salesman and Hal Johnson away, she could not sleep.

III

WHEN Hal Johnson came, a week later, to apologize for the way he had acted, she wept in his arms, and told him that he must come often—often—that they might talk about the old days

when they had been boy and girl together.

"It is so easy to sin, Hal, and people live such a little while they must get what happiness they can out of life, mustn't they?" she asked.

Her behavior puzzled Hal. It was his aspiration to become her lover now that Mr. Deckle was dead. But on several occasions, after putting her arms on his shoulders, and looking into his eyes, Mrs. Deckle, instead of telling him that she loved him, put the Bible into his hands.

"Read to me, Hal. Your voice is so sweet. It is like a minister's voice. But a church is too large. Here we are so close together that when I hear you reading I feel close to God."

When she spoke like this he felt like throwing the book to the floor, and shouting to her that she could not lead him on in this manner indefinitely. But he was never quite able to do this. And, as he read, his desire slowly passed away. He had always been proud of his voice.

One evening, when he was reading, the salesman put in an appearance. Mrs. Deckle introduced the two men.

"Hal and I are reading the Holy Book together, Dan," she explained.

Hal was glad that the stranger had come when he was reading the Bible to Kate. No one knew that he visited Mrs. Deckle now that she was a widow. He wished that he had had time to slip his collar around so that Mr. Warfield might have taken him to be a minister. He read in a deep, ministerial voice:

"The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them—"

The salesman, who had brought a bottle of moonshine whiskey with him, interrupted to say that this was the kind of stuff that would drive a lonely woman crazy. "I'll read you something," he offered.

And, taking the book from Hal's hands, he read:

"The Song of Songs, which is Solo-

mon's. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—!"

When he had finished reading the first chapter of the Song of Songs he unpacked the moonshine from his traveling bag.

A little while later Mrs. Deckle had to lie down on the couch. Hal Johnson sat with his feet on the table. The salesman, who had taken off his coat, walked about with a quiet smile on his face.

He leaned over Mrs. Deckle.

"How do you feel now, little girl?" he asked, stroking her forehead. Mrs. Deckle took his hand and clung to it.

Hal came to, wagging his head, and staring down at her with owlsh eyes.

"Remember that night you took me walking, Kate?"

He shook hands with the salesman.

"We're talking about old times. Kate and me was born right here in this little old town."

"I was born in Cincinnati," said Dan. "The nigger that gets this hooch for me is as black as a coal bunker."

"That's too bad!" answered Hal, seriously, "That's too bad!"

A great yearning, a desire to be kind and gentle to all living things, possessed Mrs. Deckle as she listened. It seemed to her that the world was full of sympathy and tenderness. She began to cry. Then she believed that God had taken her in His arms and she was soaring through a red sky into empyrean space.

"Kate's asleep!" whispered Hal.

The two men left the room on tiptoe, closing the door very quietly. On the stairs they moved with caution so that no sound might ascend and disturb the sleeping woman. On the street the salesman gave a tremendous whoop, and, throwing his coat to the pavement, shouted to an imaginary conductor to stop the car and get out and fight.

"No good waiting here, Hal. He's yellow," he said finally, picking up his coat, and whooping again. Hal took the salesman home with him.

"My wife's in the next room with the kids," he cautioned; "you're drunk. But no cutting up and raising the roof."

My wife's in the next room with the kids."

The salesman was asleep. Hal raised his voice. His wife sat up in bed to listen.

"You're drunk, but you got to keep quiet about Kate Deckle. No man forgets his first sweetheart, Dan. Kate was wild then. Hope she's wild now. But she's broadminded. She's the only woman in Wilburville for me. My wife wouldn't understand. You've done a heap of traveling, Dan. Where do folks go to when they die? You ever see anything—Kate's—sick—husband?"

The salesman was snoring. Hal Johnson pondered the matter a while, and went to sleep also.

IV

WHEN morning came Mrs. Deckle arose and looked at her face. She fancied she saw old age in her eyes; the reflection there of an old harassed woman.

The Bible lay on the table open, as Dan had left it, at the Song of Solomon. The words repelled her now. Her lips were dry; she had a disagreeable taste in her mouth. She did not want anyone to kiss her. She read the thirteenth verse of the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

As she read this over and over again she could not understand how the night before in the company of Dan and Hal she had allowed herself to drink moonshine to excess. It seemed to her that surely the devil—. Suddenly she remembered the nigger as black as a coal bunker.

She hurried over to the Presbyterian church. A loafer was prowling around looking for money between the pews. But she could not pray here; so she went next door to the minister's house.

After a while the minister and his wife escorted her to the door, where they assured her that God was taking

good care of Mr. Deckle, so there was nothing to worry about. The minister's wife was suspicious of all women who came to her husband for spiritual comfort, and made a point of always being present, when they came, to say a few kind words of sympathy.

On the street Mrs. Deckle met the salesman, hurrying off to catch his train. She passed Hal's drug store, and Hal, at the wheel of his car, gave her a quick nod and drove away.

She looked up at the sky. It would soon rain. In a long narrow mirror between stores she saw herself approach, dragging her feet.

The people beside her were dapper and brisk. A man was looking at his watch; a girl smiled at someone across the street. She stopped and stared. Suddenly she had realized that the cause of her loneliness lay in the fact that she alone feared God, and was *suffering* from the fear of Him—that none of these people cared.

Neither Dan nor Hal cared. The minister did not really care. His wife was an imposter. They were all wrapped up in their own petty egotistical pursuits, which would occupy them until the moment of death. Then—

Mrs. Deckle wished that she could warn them. She felt like praying on her knees in the middle of the street, as people had prayed in the old Biblical days. She had a vision of men and women running about in circles, and dropping one by one as God lifted His fingers. She alone realized the meaning of death; how you were alive one minute and dead the next.

"Lord have mercy!" she prayed silently.

And all men seemed empty to her, like children that had not come to a full understanding of life.

But she dreaded the long lonely years ahead of her.

To comfort herself she took to reading the Old Testament more frequently. She endeavored to occupy her mind solely with seers and prophets, idols and incense, the statutes of the heathen, temples and high places, the building of

the house of the forest of Lebanon, and the covenant of the Lord, but day by day her restlessness increased. She was often in the market looking at the ripe fruit. She began to take the street car to the outskirts of the town, where she could see over the surrounding country.

V

THEN, one evening, Hal Johnson came to see her again. He had just left when the door opened and his wife entered the room. She threatened Mrs. Deckle with law proceedings for alienating her husband's affections.

Hurling a table ornament to the floor, she burst into tears. A piece of broken porcelain had sprung up and cut Mrs. Deckle on the cheek.

"You wicked, wicked woman!" sobbed Mrs. Johnson, "Oh, you wicked, wicked woman acting like this!"

Then she called in a shrill voice: "Come in, children!"

Her four children came in, the baby rubbing his nose with both hands. He began to scream. He had seen the blood on Mrs. Deckle's cheek. The day before he had cut his finger on the tin tail of his toy horse. Mrs. Deckle, suffocating with emotion, caught him in her arms, crying,

"Baby, baby! Come to me, baby! Don't cry, little baby!"

When he screamed the louder, and struggled to escape, his mother read an omen in his behavior. She snatched him up, and marshalled the children from the room.

She remained in the doorway an instant.

"Mrs. Deckle!" she said, "I am a mother. The law will protect me and my children from the persecutions of an infamous woman!"

Mrs. Deckle, prostrated for a moment by fear and remorse, hurried to the landing, and defied her to mount the stairs again.

"You and your brood!" she shouted.

"My hands are clean, Mrs. Deckle!" answered Mrs. Johnson, holding up

large dirty hands at the foot of the stairs.

"Lord have mercy!" cried Mrs. Deckle, and the remainder of that night the fruit market echoed her excited movements overhead.

By next day she could think of Hal Johnson contemptuously. She had received a card from the salesman saying that he would be in town the following week. She felt like going up to Hal's house, and showing Mrs. Johnson the letter.

When Dan came they went to the circus. Hal was there with his wife and children. Mrs. Deckle, walking beside Dan, smiled at him when they met in the side-show, where Hal, his smooth face red and wet, was piloting Mrs. Johnson and the boys eating popcorn toward the booth occupied by the blood-sweating behemoth.

Dan Warfield, when the conductor would not fight, had told Hal his real name. Hal had told Mrs. Johnson. That night Mrs. Johnson sat down and wrote to Mrs. Sam Smith of Wilkes-Barre. As she blotted the paper the baby howled in his crib.

A few days later Mrs. Deckle sat in her rooms above the fruit market reading over a letter from Mrs. Smith, who threatened to leave her family in Wilkes-Barre to come down and meet Mrs. Deckle face to face.

Letter in hand Mrs. Deckle walked beside the river. Her mind was in a state of confusion. While Mr. Deckle lived, a source of constant irritation to her, no one had questioned her behavior; now she was threatened on all sides when she should be free. She was hurt that Dan had lied to her about his name. She knew that she did not love him, that she did not love Hal. She tried to focus her vague intense yearning. Finding this impossible, she returned and wrote a short note to Mrs. Smith, taking for her text the verse in Ecclesiastes.

"Fear God, and keep His commandments, Mrs. Smith!" she wrote, "You will find that this is about your whole duty in life. As far as I am concerned,

and as long as you desist from smart-alecking into my affairs, this is the conclusion of the whole matter."

When Hal Johnson called toward the end of the week she consented to revisit with him the spot where she had first kissed him twenty years ago.

Hal Johnson hoped that tender memories might be aroused even though he knew that the barn and the cornfield had long since gone the way of all agricultural districts adjacent to a thriving and prosperous town.

They came to a street where whole families sat on the bungalow porches and watched them walk by. Their footsteps rang on the pavement. Hal drew her toward the shadow of a fence.

"We're in the cornfield now, Kate!" he said, in a hoarse whisper, putting his arm about her.

They stood quite still waiting for the old associations to come flooding back.

A small boy on the far side of the fence pushed Hal's hat off with a stick.

While Hal cursed and banged on the fence with both fists, Mrs. Deckle climbed the rising. Here the barn had once stood. Now a cement sidewalk enclosed an empty lot. But she was not thinking of the past as she waited impatiently for Hal to join her; obscure desires for the future possessed her.

She saw those days as a tiny stage set in a looking glass, where she and Hal had acted the parts of boy and girl. Today life was striking sublimer chords. Her tears were tears of exaltation. Perhaps, after all, Hal was the man she had been dreaming of lately.

"Way out there, Hal!" she cried, clutching his arm, and pointing to a gleam of river on the horizon, "I've been a bad woman, Hal—I used to wish Tom was dead. Let us walk way out there and repent!" and she took his hand, adding, "Hallelujah!"

Hal unfastened her fingers. He did not like the manner in which she accented the word *way*. He cast furtive glances around, afraid that his wife might have followed. He decided to leave Kate Deckle alone for good after this.

"Let's go back, Kate, or we'll be caught in the rain," he soothed, taking her by the elbow.

After leaving her he stopped in at the store and ate a plate of vanilla ice cream. During the night he suffered from indigestion in his sleep, and frightened his wife occasionally with shouts of, "Who wants to walk way out to hallelujah in the rain!"

While he shouted this, Mrs. Deckle was reflecting that this night had forever dismissed Hal Johnson from her thoughts; that, in the serious years to come, he would not be even a memory. Caught in the rain! She smiled in her sleep at the pitiful fears of the man.

VI

DURING the days and nights that followed she thought only of Dan. In fancy his ruddy face appeared often to her. When he came she would test him as she had tested Hal. She read and re-read the chapter wherein Daniel correctly interpreted the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and conqueror of Jerusalem.

He came at last. She prevailed upon him to accompany her to the hill where the barn had stood. Again she threw out her hand toward the silver gleam. But the salesman, who had never suffered from katzenjammer, did not understand the meaning of the word repent, and was already squatting down on the pavement opening his grip to take out a bottle.

A little later he promised to walk with Mrs. Deckle to the stars if she would explain to him why he had seen more cats on railroad fences in Dayton, Ohio, than in any other town in the United States.

Mrs. Deckle left him sitting there. She left him, running, afraid that he would follow. She never saw him again.

She walked hurriedly, her face flushed, her brain feverish. Were all men but empty shells, in which no soul throbbed, or could ever throb, in unison with her own? In the whole wide world did there not exist one other human

being who realized the tragedy of existence?

"Kyrie Eleison!" rang a great voice, "The Lord have mercy on you, my poor people."

She was near the circus grounds. A ruddy-faced man stood on a box surrounded by a small crowd. Some boys laughed, and he bent toward them.

"And the Lord have mercy on *you*, my poor children!" he said, gently, "You will be devoured by bears." Then he threw back his head and shouted, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, that said: What thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia."

Mrs. Deckle stood quite still, her heart beating tumultuously. As people pushed through to the back and left, she moved toward the front. The crowd dwindled. At last she stood alone.

The ruddy-faced man thundered on

as though addressing a vast concourse that filled Wilburville from the circus grounds to the river.

And suddenly a great resolution, a great hope, moved Mrs. Deckle to take the hand of this man and lead him away. She led him to the edge of the town, and pointed to the river.

"Way out there!" she cried. "Let us walk way out there and repent!"

The man gave a mighty laugh, and threw out his arms to the sky.

"Kyrie Eleison!" he said, simply, "I will walk with you to God!"

VII

ONE day when the salesman met Hal Johnson in the street, he asked about Mrs. Deckle, who no longer occupied the rooms above the fruit market.

Hal's blue eyes gleamed with anger.

"She went away with a crazy man," he said, "who sleeps in barns, and thinks that he's John the Baptist."



A MARRIED woman learns philosophy. She learns that there are always two sides to every question. One is her husband's side. The other is the right side.



STRAIGHT hair can be a very beautiful thing in a woman, providing she has legs to match.



POPULAR—To be gifted with the virtue of knowing a whole lot of uninteresting people.



Mother and Child

By George Boas

I

I HAD been the closest friend of Agnes Brookfield's father and naturally tried to keep an eye on the girl and her mother after Brookfield's death. I don't quite see what I could have done that I left undone, yet that does not ease my mind at all. I had inklings that Agnes was discouraged about something, was even unhappy, but like a fool I held my tongue. Suppose now, I had spoken to her. She would have given me one of those cool smiles of dismissal which she used to affect and I'd have cursed myself for interfering.

One could not interfere in Agnes' affairs. That trait she inherited from her father. In 1907 Brookfield almost went to the wall rather than let his friends help him out. He never spoke about his difficulties at the time even to me and when I discovered later what a tight squeeze he had been in and reproached him for his secretiveness, he gave me that same smile and I knew that he was proud of his single-handed victory. *Italia fa da se.*

When Agnes smiled in that superior manner most people marched off in rage, for they could not bear the snub. I imagine that I would have, too, except that it suddenly came to me one afternoon, just before her disappearance, that neither she nor her father were doing more than mask a terrible weakness which if not dominated would conquer. It was no expression of firm and stalwart independence; it was the expression of fear.

It came to me at tea from a remark

of Agnes'. Mrs. Brookfield was lying on the rose damask sofa in her little sitting-room in one of those tea gowns which she still affected. In spite of her position on the sofa, with one slipper dangling from her toe, she had a genuine air of the *grande dame* about her. Perhaps it was her white crinkly pompadour; perhaps it was her little blue eyes which were quite the wrong eyes for a semi-invalid.

We were talking of old times and the cotillion of 1900 particularly, which was the year of Agnes' début.

"We all thought then, Eileen," I said, "that Agnes would be hostess at Walnut Hill. . . ."

Mrs. Brookfield's cup hovered in mid-air. Then, deliberately taking a sip:

"Why, Robert," she said, "I'm sure that she's happier here with me than married. This is the same as her house."

"Of course," I hastened to add, "she could not be happier than with her own mother."

It was at that moment that Agnes came into the room. The little bell of the Dresden clock struck. It was five-thirty.

"Is that you, darling?" said Mrs. Brookfield. "Why are you so late? If Robert hadn't come in I'd have been all alone. . . . Aren't you going to kiss me? How cold your lips are! Do take off that tweed coat, darling; it smells so. Why do you wear those mannish things? The modern girl, Robert. . . ."

I looked at Agnes who had drawn herself up from stooping over her mother. She began to pull off her thick brown kid gloves. Her face in

the shadow looked drawn and tired. "Have you been painting lately?" I asked her.

"She works too much, Robert. You must speak to her. You know she won't listen to me."

"Mother," Agnes broke in, and threw her heavy coat over one of the gilt chairs which stood about the room. It looked like an Airedale in a salon.

"But you do, Agnes."

Agnes poured herself some tea. She set the teapot on the blue and white tile and darted a look at her mother. Her forehead tightened, but immediately subsided.

Then she turned to me and began to talk of irrelevant things.

I left shortly after and Agnes walked to the door of the apartment with me.

As I took her hand to say goodbye, I said:

"You must take things more easily, Agnes. Your mother is worried about you."

She smiled and lowered her eyes.

"Not really worried," she said.

II

It all came back to me when I heard that she had disappeared. Everything rushed to a conclusion which was horrible in its speed and indifference. I had gone from Providence to New York for the week-end and could not believe the headlines in the papers. The Brookfields were not the kind of people who get into the public press. But the names were identical and even the photograph, though hideously out of date, was recognizable. The account of the matter said that she had been missing for two days before the police were notified and that no trace of her had been found. The authorities "scouted the idea of suicide."

Saturday's paper said that she had been traced to an obscure hotel which I could swear she didn't know existed.

Sunday's paper said that Saturday's clue was wrong, and the mystery was as great as ever.

And on Monday morning came the

news that her body was stumbled upon where the Pawtucket River empties into the Cove. Apparently she had jumped in at the falls and been washed downstream.

There is no need of rehearsing again all the sickening details which the papers cooked up for the occasion according to their tastes. Her age varied from 30 to 42; her motive from something unknown to unrequited love; her movements were outlined in some papers with even a map showing the route she must have taken to get from Thayer Street to Edgewood. How could they be so cruel?

To be quite honest, I dreaded facing Mrs. Brookfield and was glad of a week's interval between the discovery of Agnes's body and my return. No doubt it was cowardly of me, but I could not bring myself to return earlier. All the Brookfields from Bristol would be there and all the Harrisons, to say nothing of the Providence people. It was better to stay away.

When I got back everyone had the suicide on his lips; everyone blamed the girl for doing such a thing and disgracing her family. The general consensus of opinion was against her and practically all were sure that she was despondent over her spinsterhood and the gradual eclipse of her social prominence.

Consequently I was more than embarrassed when I called upon Mrs. Brookfield.

To my surprise she brought up the question of Agnes' motives herself. She sat there in a black *crêpe de chine* gown as imperial as ever and touched her eyes from time to time with an exquisite handkerchief. She, too, seemed to be grieving more for the disgrace, the public scandal, than for the state of mind which had driven her daughter to put an end to herself.

"Whatever could she have been thinking of, Robert?" she asked. And she went over their life together, trying to convince me how delightful it must have been for Agnes.

"So many girls would have been more than happy to be in her position.

She hadn't a care in the world and her mother always at her side. . . . It was that painting that did it. I begged her to give it up. It wasn't as if she needed money. But she wouldn't listen. Her father was the same. My life has been very hard, Robert."

She wiped her eyes and I coughed.

"Children never seem to realize that their parents know best. If she had taken my advice, she would have given up painting and we could have had a quiet life together. If she had wanted anything whatsoever I'd have given it to her. She needed a rest and she wouldn't take it."

"I knew she needed a rest," I said, "but I am not sure that. . . ."

But I let my sentence end itself in a sigh.

"She was often thoughtless and would go out to dinners, leaving me alone; once she suggested going off for a week-end with the Thorpes. But I didn't complain. On the contrary, I wanted her to have a good time and used to urge her to go out more, even though it would leave me all by myself in this condition. And now——"

She passed her hand over her forehead and I looked up at Sully's portrait of her great-great-grandmother. She, too, had a large, clear forehead. But her daughter had lived.

"The terrible thing, Robert, is the way she left me. That awful Thursday

morning—shall I ever forget it?—the maid came to me while I was still in bed, the maid, Robert. Mrs. Brookfield, she said, Miss Agnes says to say that she is very tired and she must go away to a sanatorium. She told the maid to tell a message like that to her own mother. Naturally I was shocked, but I thought that she must be very tired indeed to act in that manner. Why didn't she come to me directly and we could have had a good heart to heart talk."

"Eileen," I said, grasping the arms of my chair, "you didn't scold the child?"

"Scold my darling? Scold her, Robert? I forgot the manner in which the message was delivered to me and said to the maid, 'Will you please tell Miss Agnes that her mother understands entirely, that she agrees that the trip be undertaken, and that they will go together.'"

"That was the last I heard from her, Robert, until—this thing was discovered."

She broke down utterly.

I took her arm and helped her to the sofa.

"Will you ring for the nurse?" she said.

I rang.

"You will never know, Robert, how I miss my darling," she sobbed. "I never thought that my old age would be comforted by strangers."



A MAN can be more kinds of a fool in a given time than a woman; but in endurance she beats him to a standstill.



IF marriage is a lottery, the Mormons must be ticket speculators.



Markley Street

By John Cavendish

I

LAST week I walked down Markley Street for the first time in thirty years. My impression was that the street had diminished in size. The houses were familiar, although of course I saw no familiar faces, but they seemed shrunken and withal shabby. But after I had walked the length of this old thoroughfare I was not sorry to have revisited it. A great many old impressions were brightened and renewed, and some forgotten recollections returned to mind.

I saw the house where I had lived with the Wyeth family, but naturally I had no need to look upon those walls again to remember all I knew of old Mrs. Wyeth, or the grandmother, or the spinster aunt, or, above all, Laura, the younger daughter of the family. I had been given a whole year in which to observe these people at a time when I had little else with which to entertain myself. For when I lived with the Wyeths my affairs were in declension, my fortunes were, so to speak, suspended, and I was living through a period of waiting for that turn of luck which, happily, came to me in the end.

With plenty of time on my hands in those days, everything that happened in Markley Street interested me. Never since have I had the leisure to observe so intimately the habits and prejudices of any group of people. I could tell you a thousand inconsequential anecdotes which, even if they proved uninteresting, would at least demonstrate how min-

utely I watched the street's affairs during the time I was resident there.

For example, as I walked the familiar pavement last week I swore to myself that I was able to identify the precise spot where poor Billy McCrae, encouraged by drink, fought the long-threatened battle with his odious neighbor, Johnson, and was defeated. It was I who assisted him from the gutter and took him indoors. Safe in his own home, and inspired by another drink, his spirits swiftly revived and in a slightly tremulous, drunken voice he sang me a very charming Irish song.

But I would not have you believe that Markley Street, because it housed a drunkard or two, was rowdy. Quite the opposite. The keynote of the street was respectability, respectability of a virulent, an almost poisonous sort. Those Markley Streeters were Protestant, church-going people, invincible in their assurance that all human conduct was a matter of inflexible rules. When I lived among them they were the source of much malicious amusement to me. But the atmosphere that could amuse an unregenerate outsider like myself must have been immeasurably distressing to Laura Wyeth. Looking back, I realize now that the street at large, almost as much as the conditions within her own home, contributed to her unhappiness.

The Wyeths occupied the last home in the row, and in order to reach the corner Laura had to walk the entire block, had to pass before every house, and in doing so endure the ordeal of many an acid glance. When she first

came to Markley Street, indeed, the women who passed judgment from their parlor windows, or, on warm days, from the elevations of their porch fronts, observed her with suspicion. She was a divorced woman and therefore attainted. Toward the end, after the incidents of the irate Mr. Richardson, and his spectacular suicide, they regarded her with stares that were abominably wounding to her sensitive spirit; with whispers to which she reacted with a bitter shrinking.

Next to the Wyeths lived the Freeds. Freed himself was a decent enough old fellow, a man, as I discovered, who drank an occasional glass of whiskey and chewed roasted peanuts thereafter to cover his breath. He always had a little handful of shelled peanuts rattling together in his coat pocket. There was a touch of comic lewdness to his imagination, but he was, in all home affairs, most abjectly under the authority of his wife. Mrs. Freed used to look at poor Laura as if she were a serpent. When she said good-morning to the girl the simple words of greeting became strangely envenomed. As I recall her, her immortal soul resided within a most unprepossessing coil of mortality. She was fat, rheumatic and wheezy. When morally inflamed, her hard breath was exhaled like the panting expirations of a dragon. Although she had never given birth to viable issue, her figure had that permanent shapelessness that is the result of repeated maternity. Her reddish face was studded with what are called in the advertisements "superfluous hairs." The Freeds had a harmonium upon which the Madame played hymns, and sang them in a surprisingly weak voice, full of melancholy quavers. Old Freed, having munched a few peanuts to hide his delinquency, used to join her in these devotions. Their vocal praise must have been very entertaining to God.

But, full of all these disjuncted

recollections, I neglect my chief purpose, which is to tell something about the Wyeths and especially about Laura. She was already a divorced woman when I first came to live with her family. I was a paying guest. But in appearance she was then no more than a pretty young girl whose natural sweetness of face was curiously tintured with a vague essence of bitterness.

II

THERE was no joy of life in Mrs. Wyeth, nor in her elder daughter Judith, and it is presumable that Laura's own zest for living was a paternal heritage. Mr. Wyeth died several years before I knew the family. When his widow spoke of him it was with a peculiar inflexibility of her thin lips that bespoke her disapprobation of his memory. In words she would not say anything ill of the dead, but she was powerless to control her features, her tightened lips, the chill glints in her grey eyes.

From what I could learn, Mr. Wyeth had never subscribed to her austerities, theological or ethical. He was, I surmised, a bit of a roisterer. He spent money freely and after his death the family found it necessary to practice immediate economies. They sold their former home and moved to that lesser establishment in Markley Street. I think that, having known more expansive days, Mrs. Wyeth always despised her neighbors a little. She felt that she was possessed of a superior gentility. It must have been her secret desire to present to those Markley Street housewives a front so impeccable and aloof that their small pretenses to respectability would pale to a counterfeit semblance in its cold, white light. That, through the misadventures of her daughter, she was to be thwarted in this passion of her declining years was, I now perceive, a severe misfortune. She treated the girl with an uncompassionate severity and be-

cause of that I used to think of her very uncharitably. The passage of years has given me either a more tolerant philosophy or a superior perspective. I can, at this time, bestow whatever I feel of pity not only upon the girl, but upon the mother as well.

Laura had suffered the experiences of her first romance before I knew her. Prior to her unfortunate marriage she had been a girl whose natural gaiety was not to be suppressed. Although she always presented to me a face almost devoid of smiles, it was easy to see that laughter was natural to her features. No one, I imagine, could have been more gayly irresponsible or assured than she was until experience came like an unwelcome interloper into the romantic aura of her illusions.

She was sent to boarding-school, and when she returned a lover was already attached to her person. He was Walter Hardwick, an unbalanced youth who afterward, compelled by an erotic dementia, slew himself. He was the brother of one of Laura's classmates, and was at that time scarcely more than a boy.

It is improbable that Laura was ever very fond of him. He was too much the moon-calf, the meek sentimentalist. I have seen his portrait and the photograph reveals an immaturely delicate face, feminine about the lips and chin and, in the large eyes, lugubrious. Strangely enough, Mrs. Wyeth, although she deemed her daughter far too young to be the recipient of masculine attentions, did not repel young Hardwick. His family was satisfactory, he had prospects of a decent inheritance, and he was permitted to call at the Wyeth home. Perhaps the old woman shrewdly divined that an early and satisfactory marriage would not be an ill thing for her girl. I understand that young Walter was almost clownishly respectful to Mrs. Wyeth and that he submitted to her chaperonage without demur. One derives a picture of a ludicrous love-making:

Laura and her melting gallant are seated in the drawing-room on separate chairs, at a severely respectable distance, and while they converse they are ever under the gelid surveillance of the mother, who sits apart from them perched on her great oaken rocking chair, a wasp-like intensity contained within a parched and arid body. Unable to express his emotions in words, the youth puts his sentimental soul into his large, moist eyes. He laves Laura with a wash of adoring glances. But this futile adoration was not for her! She wished, not to be worshipped as a piece of exquisite bric-a-brac, but to be handled and mastered in an authentically masculine grasp.

I don't know when she began her secret meetings with the Winslow fellow. She seemed to recognize instinctively that it would be an unwise thing to reveal Winslow to her mother. He never visited the house. Laura met him, I suppose, on the street. From these facts the obvious deduction is that Winslow was masculine to the point of brutality. That he was brutal is affirmed, indeed, by his subsequent acts.

One day, Laura, having left the house in the morning, she did not return either for luncheon or for dinner. In great perturbation Mrs. Wyeth was on the point of notifying the police when the telephone rang and Laura's voice informed her that she was now a married woman. She was Mrs. Bob Winslow.

In Mrs. Wyeth's world a man could be Robert, but never for any serious purposes Bob. To me, at a later time, she used to utter that monosyllable with great bitterness. It seemed to epitomize the man; it was a simple formula for the expression of her contempt. But she never proffered me a physical description. I have but a conjectural idea of his likeness. I think he must have been wholly lacking in all the social graces, as he was assuredly wanting in every delicacy. Laura, with her gay airs, and yet

fundamentally delicate emotions, was like a very sensitive flower in his crude hands. I can imagine her quick disillusionment and the shock of their first and last quarrel. For she returned to her home within two months of her marriage, and as for the quarrel, she bore for a time a physical remembrance. Winslow had seized her wrists and for weeks, upon that fragile skin, the cruel impress of his fingers was revealed, a circle of purple discolorations that were afterward turned to important evidence in the divorce proceedings before a Master.

The divorce itself always puzzled me. The theological certainties of Mrs. Wyeth did not countenance divorce. I afterward learned that this step was taken by an energetic uncle, who appeared from his home in San Francisco, gave no heed to his sister-in-law's austere remonstrances, saw Laura through her legal difficulties and then retired to the remoteness of his Western abode where, after the passage of a few months, he died. Had her uncle survived, Laura's story might have been different.

III

THE Wyeths had moved to Markley Street almost immediately after Laura's marriage. During the short term of her absence the family consisted of the grandmother, whose name was also Wyeth, the mother, and Judith, a spinster aunt. Judith was not the acidulous spinster of convention; rather, as I remember her, she was wholly colorless. She resembled a plant that, having striven against adverse conditions of temperature and soil in its first leafings, attains at last to an enfeebled, an etiolated maturity. I have already given you some notion of Mrs. Wyeth. As for the grandmother, she revealed, in a subdued fashion, some of the more convivial characteristics of her dead son. When I knew her she was fat, senile, and perpetually

smiling. Mrs. Wyeth dominated her, and while the old lady, by all external signs, revealed an entire compliance to the authority of her daughter-in-law, it is my conviction that her obedience was conditioned by many a mental reservation. There was even something mocking in her ancient smile.

It was to this home that Laura returned after the disaster of her marriage. The energetic uncle from the West, having taken things into his own hands, curiously abandoned her. Evidently he was a thoughtless old fellow and, like many domineering men, not very perspicacious. If he had carried Laura's salvation to the point of taking her away with him into a new atmosphere, into the genial liberality of his own home, he would have spared her much distress. But he had no idea, I suppose, of the ordeal that awaited her at her own hearth. He was not the sort of man to understand the prejudices of Markley Street, or the mind of Laura's mother.

When I first saw Laura Wyeth she impressed me as a very lovely girl. Her abundant hair was a deep yellow that held a tint of brown; her eyebrows, by contrast, were a dark brown and her eyes were nearly black. But the sunlight, when it fell over her face, enlivened them with a sparkle of blonde fire. Her lips were full but notably mobile, and it seemed that their flexuous curves were made for smiles, although I seldom saw them in that happy semblance. She was a tall girl with a body designed for swift movements, but in the days that I knew her she moved about languorously, as if under a ceaseless physical oppression. No doubt she was oppressed, physically as well as mentally; the first would be a natural reflex of the second.

I was young enough and free-hearted enough to be taken with her. In the beginning the tincture of melancholy in her face fascinated me.

Later, when I thoroughly understood its cause, I would have done much to remove it. I wonder now why I never made a more direct, a more ardent approach to Laura. I was perhaps too soon distracted from her outward physical charm by an augmenting interest in her psychology. She became a kind of problem and hence lost some measure of her personal appeal. I may as well say at once that there were never any amorous passages between us. Only once did we meet on any terms of intimacy and that mood was evanescent.

When she came to live in the house in Markley Street it was quickly known by all the neighbors that she was a divorced woman. Although she was so girlish in appearance I never heard her called a girl. The fact that she was divorced made her undeniably a woman and the word was used with an intonation of very subtle depreciation. She was, as I mentioned before, attainted, and not only in the eyes of the neighbors but also in those of her own mother. It was exasperating, and it became pitiful, to observe the severity with which Mrs. Wyeth glanced at her daughter. Her gaze invariably contained within its chill beams the sting of an unspoken reproach. As for the spinster aunt, her attitude, if she had any, was inscrutable. Though she did not accuse Laura of any delinquency, by word or glance, neither did she offer to ameliorate her misery by any display of affection. In that household Judith Wyeth moved about like a shadow, austere emotionless. Only from her grandmother did the girl derive any small assurance that somewhere in the world a class of folk existed who would find nothing shameful in her position. The old grandmother always smiled, and now and then she touched her grandchild's dusky, golden hair with tremulous, caressing fingers.

Laura lived among these severities for several months until, seeking

an outlet from an almost intolerable confinement of her natural feelings, she began her friendship with Alexander Richardson.

I don't know how she met Richardson, but in the beginning, to a certain degree, he managed to insinuate himself into Mrs. Wyeth's favor. He was not a young man. I should put his age at fifty. His hair was prematurely white, but abundant, and he was obviously proud of its silken wave. He wore a large white moustache, an impressive embellishment. His complexion was ruddy and when he spoke the capillaries upon his cheeks became engorged. This heightened color gave a falacious dignity and importance to his utterances.

Richardson was a second-rate landscape painter, but it was unnecessary for him to earn anything from his work. He labored, as he put it, "for the love of art." He may have been sincere enough in his devotion, but he was not one to whom the muse had vouchsafed much authentic inspiration. One of his landscapes was presented to Laura and it hung in the Markley Street parlor—a very watery water-color, totally wanting in any unity of tone.

But Laura was, I am sure, fascinated by the man. She found his occupation romantic and in her inexperience she deemed him a quite desirable type of gentleman. Even Mrs. Wyeth was deceived by his somewhat sham gentility. The dignity of his red face and white head impressed her, as it impressed Laura. And to Laura, Richardson provided some necessary diversion. During the period of their acquaintance she grew oblivious to the hard stares of the neighbors. The prejudices of Markley Street began to lose their importance. Richardson took her to teas and artistic gatherings and finally she fell into the habit, without her mother's knowledge, of visiting his studio.

It pleased me to see something of

the cloud rising from the girl's spirits. Then came the second disaster.

IV

WHEN Laura married the Winslow fellow her lugubrious lover, Walter Hardwick, dropped out of her life. I was told that he came once to the house, shortly after her marriage, and spent a melancholious half hour with Mrs. Wyeth. I understand that he wept and that Laura's mother was shocked by his open display of feeling, which she deemed obscurely indecent. Had he been indignant, had he condemned Laura, she would have been grateful to him. But he came like a whipped dog that creeps back to the feet of his master.

"I'd do anything for dear Laura," he said. "I pray God she may be happy."

"God will not grant happiness to the disobedient," was Mrs. Wyeth's answer.

Thereafter Walter disappeared. Then, after Laura had known the artist for several months, that infatuated boy cropped up again, not in person, but as an epistolary presence. He began to write letters to the girl, long, tear-bestrewed incoherencies to which she became, in the end, indifferent. Had he called at the house in any decent manner she probably would have restored him to some measure of favor. But from the extravagances of his letters she shrank away. She did not understand that the boy was neurotic and that his letters were the evidences of his increasing neurosis.

One summer afternoon, while Laura and old Richardson were together, a very tragic thing happened in their presence. They were strolling arm in arm down one of the streets when a disheveled young man, emerging from the crowd, poised himself before them and put a stop to their progress.

It was Walter Hardwick, although, as Laura said, he was scarcely recog-

nizable. He spoke with the incoherency of a drunken man and he had an inebriate appearance. He wore no hat, his hair was uncombed, and his clothing was in great disarray. This figure was in itself sufficiently alarming, but to it was added a genuine touch of terror by the ominous revolver which was waved about in one agitated hand.

The crowd fell back; several women screamed. Richardson and Laura were left alone on the pavement, confronted by this insane youth and his dangerous weapon. Walter was talking, a sputter of incomprehensible words. He seemed to be making an accusation; suddenly he pointed the gun and fired. No one knows whether he fired at Laura or at her companion. At any rate, the bullet went wide of either mark. Then he turned the pistol upon himself, and with more accurate effect. The shot entered his mouth and he fell. When the policeman who arrived picked him up he was dead.

That evening the papers announced the suicide with these headlines: "Jilting Drives Youth Crazy." Also "Life of Prominent Artist Threatened." A vulgarly sensational recital of the facts was appended. That was so distorted as to make it appear that Laura had deserted the dead youth in favor of old Richardson.

To this exposure of his privacy, Richardson reacted in a most astonishing manner. His presumed gentility dropped from him like a flimsy mask. He became insanely irate and it was his absurd contention that Laura had in some fashion deceived him. She had not informed him of Walter Hardwick's existence. She had exposed him to a scandalous encounter.

He appeared the following morning at the Wyeth house with a face as crimson as a ripe tomato. He made a most abominable scene. His loud voice carried through the house and

out into the street, and his words were drunk up by the neighbors.

"I consider your daughter's conduct highly reprehensible," he belowed to Mrs. Wyeth. "Do you imagine that if I had known anything about such an entanglement as this I would have ever come to this house? My good lady, I am a gentleman. I detest these cheap scandals. I would have given almost anything to avoid such a vulgar compromise. It's shameful! It's outrageous! I've been made a party to the cheapest kind of an affair!"

Needless to say, the conduct of Richardson and the shame of the publicity reduced Laura to an extremity of sensitive shrinking. For several weeks she refused to leave the house, although she certainly found no haven of comfort within those austere walls. Poor old Mrs. Wyeth! I can pity her now, I can understand the laceration of her pride, but at the time I was on the point of addressing to her some hard, accusing word. All my sympathies were for the girl.

One evening I came upon her in the parlor, seated behind the drawn curtain of the window, but even in the dim light I saw that she had been weeping. Something impelled me to speak to her, and for the first time intimately.

"Miss Wyeth," I said, "please don't imagine that all the people in this world are utterly devoid of sense. God knows, you've done nothing shameful and there's no reason for you to suffer so much. You need a change, you need something to brighten you up. Won't you let me take you out this evening? We can dine somewhere, or take a drive through the park, or do anything that might please you."

She shook her head, and for a moment she could not speak. Finally, very slowly, she murmured:

"I can't go out. But—thank you, thank you very, very much!"

V

I DON'T know what sort of nervous collapse Laura Wyeth might have suffered ultimately had nothing happened to save her from that spiritual imprisonment in Markley Street and her home. In Markley Street she had now become a notorious figure. The drunken debauches of McCrae were a pale scandal compared with this one that was derived from Laura's misfortunes. When she traversed the block she was exposed to a sibilant battery of wounding whispers. In the end, had she remained there, would the interest in her have declined? Would her mother have relented a little and permitted her a kind of warped peace? No one can say, for there came an event that released her.

The particular hero destined to rescue the girl was the son of one of her most severe neighbors. His name was Hunter Cameron, and during the early months of Laura's residence in Markley Street he had been absent from home. I remember his mother, Mrs. Cameron, as a woman with a very red nose. One might have thought her a tipster, although to her alcohol was anathema. Upon her face that rubic nose was a most astounding blossom—a passion-flower blooming in a desert.

Young Cameron returned to his home after several years' absence as a construction engineer in the West, and from the beginning he cast interested eyes at Laura Wyeth. By some means, I know not how, he came to know her and he strove very diligently to make himself agreeable. Careless of the neighborhood opinion, and defiant of his mother's wishes, he would call at the Wyeth house, but he was never received by Laura. Did she dislike him? That, in the light of subsequent events, is hardly probable. She was, I imagine, dispirited and afraid. She wished to shrink and hide. She feared all contacts and encounters.

So when Cameron made his informal visits he seldom caught more than a glimpse of the girl, and during the brief periods of his stays he was forced to talk with her mother, or sometimes the old grandmother. Grandmother Wyeth conceived an almost instant liking for this young man. She bestowed upon him a more than common number of her smiles. When she saw him she chuckled and she seemed to meditate some obscure purpose to which the fortunes of Cameron were intimate.

Then a very disagreeable thing happened. Mrs. Cameron called on Laura's mother and requested that her son be received more coldly. In short, she broadly intimated that the Wyeth house was no place for her boy. This was insulting; I am not aware how Mrs. Wyeth answered her, but I know that the women ceased to speak thereafter. But the next time young Cameron crossed the street and rang the Wyeth door-bell, he was not admitted.

For a time he was at a loss to comprehend this abrupt rejection of his friendly advances. But he was a determined chap, not easily to be put aside. At last he wrung a confession from his mother and after a passage of harsh words he emerged from his home with a volcanic vehemence, ran across the street, and rang again and again at the Wyeth bell.

It was early evening and Laura's mother was not at the moment in the house. Only the grandmother and Laura were there—the spinster aunt was also absent. Cameron rang the bell and then pounded on the door, as if he would force his entrance burglariously if legitimate admission were denied him.

Peeping from behind the parlor curtains Laura discerned his presence. She called her grandmother.

"Tell him no one is at home," she instructed.

"And suppose he asks for you, dearie?" inquired the old lady.

"I'm not at home either."

Laura closed the parlor door and sat waiting until her grandmother should dispose of the visitor. Grandmother Wyeth went to the front door and greeted Cameron with a series of her most agreeable smiles.

"Come in, young man," she said. "Come right in!"

She was ebullient with chuckles and suppressed laughter. She had the air of a half-demented conspirator who is about to consummate a protracted intrigue. She led Cameron through the hall and opened the parlor door.

"Go right in there, young man," she said.

Cameron entered; and with a surprising agility Grandmother Wyeth closed the door upon him and turned the key in the lock!

When Mrs. Wyeth returned a short time later she found her husband's mother still grinning and chuckling outside the locked door. Within the room there were voices, murmurous now. Clutching her heart for a moment, the unfortunate woman confronted this new scandal. Then, with a parched rigidity of face, she unlocked the door. She entered the room. What did she expect to see? God knows how far her imagination had carried her. But she perceived nothing worse than Hunter Cameron clasping Laura's hands in his own. He turned to Mrs. Wyeth with a smile.

"I've won over her," he said. "All I needed was this chance. I was sure she wouldn't deny me. By God! I'm a fortunate man! Mrs. Wyeth, your daughter and I are to be married as quickly as possible!"

And that was the end. That was the last of Markley Street for Laura Wyeth. Did she enter into the alliance with young Cameron with any renascence of her illusions? I cannot say. But I know that, by virtue of the deliverance, she must have found some happiness with him, as much, perhaps, as is accorded any of us.

Old Man Neilandecker

By F. M. Pumphrey

I

OLD MAN NEILANDECKER, who was getting pretty well along in years, sat in his old-fashioned rocker on the front porch of the house at the edge of town and let his mind waver from queer fantasy to vague remembrance and querulent complaint. Years back he had been critical of the contents of his mind, and, when he caught himself flying off at a tangent from all reason, brought himself up sharply, saying he must stop it, that he must be getting old. Now that he indubitably had got old he never gave his mind any concern, but let it be as vagrant as it would. Occasionally, however, a drift of thought would play itself out to an end, and he would note that his mind was blank; whereupon he would blink his eyes and moisten his withered lips and swallow dryly, and then start in on a new drift.

From the length of his gaunt frame he had been what in his youth he would have called pretty much of a man; but now little but the bones were left. His long legs made acute angles with great knobs at the knees, plainly visible through his loose trousers, and his bony fingers and stringy wrists thrust grotesquely from the sleeves of his faded blue cotton shirt, which was primly clean and carefully buttoned, like that of a little boy freshly fixed up for school; and over his drooping shoulders was thrown an old lady's gray shawl, with two symmetrical fringed corners hanging down over his chest. His face was a good deal like that cast of Voltaire which drawing students do after they have succeeded with blocks and

balls and bowls and ears, and clenched plaster hands. But old man Neilandecker was farther gone than Voltaire. He had more wrinkles and the expression of his face was more irascible. His skin was a dry, leathery brown, his hair was sparse and iron-gray, and from his ears grew little tufts of hair with a tendency to curl. He no longer had a tooth in his head, and his lips were always tightly compressed, as though he had just made up his mind about something.

He had been asleep the greater part of the day, but now that night had come he was wide awake, and vaguely alive to all the sensations that came with the dark. But they no longer had the connection and connotation they once had held, but came either as mere sensations, meaningless and interesting, or else in outlandish groupings with no particular sense of their own, which intrigued the old man strangely. He could work up quite a bit of feeling over stimuli which meant little to anyone else.

Every night, for instance, he waited for the first sounding of the whistle of the evening local over on the railroad, which ran into town just the other side of Eilert's orchard, directly in front of the old man. He no longer remembered that there was such a thing as a railroad, nevertheless the sound of the whistle and the passing of the train was his daily adventure. The whistle should first be heard from a distance, when the signal was blown for the pike crossing out beyond the cemetery; and it should be the regulation crossing warning, that is, two long blasts followed by two short ones. But the engineer who pulled the local had an ear, so

that he made the signal as two medium blasts, then a very short one, and then a long climax of a wail full of an eery beauty as it died down the wind.

As soon as he heard it old man Neilandecker would grip the arms of his chair and wait anxiously for a repetition of the signal as the train came into town. This time it was blown quite close, and made the old man start, and stiffen suddenly; and he almost flinched as the train rushed past just beyond the sparse old orchard, an impetuous blur of racing lights through the trees, with a great hissing of steam and a roaring exhaust. Sometimes the fireman chose that particular time to throw open the fire door and take a look at his fire, so that a burst of brilliant orange light would spring up to reflect against the great roll of smoke overhead and all the fields and houses would be bathed in a dim, rosy light, and the old man would turn up his eyes in wonder. But this happened only seldom, and had the prestige of a comet, while the whistle was every night.

Once in a while the engineer took a day off and was replaced by a younger man who jazzed his signals; and when this occurred old man Neilandecker was peevish about it all the next day. He tried once to tell Sophie Halliday how it was, thinking that perhaps she had something to do with it; but as the whistle, for him, had no connection with a railroad, he could not make her understand; and taking it for granted his mind was wandering she so patently humored him that old man Neilandecker lost his temper and called her a damn fool. Then Sophie threatened to wash out his mouth with soap and water, which made things worse than ever.

Tonight, however, the whistle was blown quite according to schedule, and but for one thing the evening was satisfactory. From where he sat old man Neilandecker could see the light on the semaphore pole at the station, like a distincter star gleaming oddly red against the silver blue of the evening sky. For the local to pass this should

become green; but afterward the operator forgot to make it red again, and old man Neilandecker, who was used to let his eyes rest upon it, felt that someone was playing tricks with him. He watched it fretfully and wished that Sophie would come out on the porch so that he could complain to her about it. He had not a doubt in the world but that she was at the bottom of it anyway. But even as he watched the light suddenly became red; and licking his lips and swallowing, old man Neilandecker leaned back in his chair and clasped his hands together, at peace for the time with the world.

The house was a small one, but was set well back in a large lot planted with majestic elm trees through which the wind sighed darkly and gently. A narrow walk of planks laid loose on the ground so long ago that they were now rotten and crumbling ran out to the road, where there was a picket fence with gateposts which stood white and ghostlike against the night, and near the walk were snowball bushes in full bloom, as well as lilacs, which mingled their sweetness with the homely odor of an ancient wooden tub set under a gutter to catch rain-water. A bit down the road was a weeping willow opposite a sputtering arc-light which brought out in bold relief its lugubrious mass, while directly in front of the house was the Eilert orchard from behind which a nearly full moon was invading the sky; and vagrant wisps of tenuous clouds wrought a delicate lacery across her face. There was a dim hum of people from the town, and from closer by, where an insignificant creek crossed the road, came an idiotic chorus of frogs.

"Goin' to rain," thought old man Neilandecker casually. He thought vividly of the time when he was a very small boy and his father told him that frogs singing meant that rain was coming. He had wondered then how many frogs it took to make so much noise, and whether the cadence might not be caused by one frog croaking with every breath, or whether a number took turns. All his life long he had wondered about

that, yet he had never found out; and now he was so old it no longer mattered. When he was a little fellow he used to like to steal up on frogs and throw a rock, whereupon they would suddenly be stilled. Then he too would keep very quiet until they started up again, whereupon he would surprise them with another rock; and keep it up until his mother made him come to bed.

For some reason it occurred to him to hum "Rock of Ages," and he tried, first in bass and then in falsetto; but it didn't sound like much, besides giving him an uncomfortable strained feeling at the back of his neck; so he decided not to sing, but just to sit.

II

AFTER a while Sophie Halliday came out on the porch. She had finished the dishes and covered the table with a cloth and straightened things out for the morning; and the screen door slammed to behind her with a bang as she stepped out, making the porch creak uneasily with her considerable weight. She paused beside old man Neilandecker's chair with motherly solicitude to rearrange his shawl, which so enraged the old man that he jerked the shawl off altogether and threw it to the floor. With sublime patience Sophie stooped heavily for it and again placed it around his shoulders, only to have him throw it once more to the floor.

"I don't want that durn thing!" he shrilly defied her.

"Why, Mr. Neilandecker!" said Sophie in aggrieved surprise as she put the shawl back around his shoulders, "Would you talk that way to Sophie? You have had your shawl on all day."

"Ain't neither," said the old man; "you just now brought it out here and you know it. Go on off now, and lemme alone."

"All right, all right," said Sophie softly, and sat down at his feet, on the edge of the porch. Old man Neilandecker forgot the shawl as quickly as he had gone into a rage about it.

Sophie Halliday was an ample lady of some forty-five years, but she looked much younger. She had on a white dress with the sleeves rolled up above her elbows, which showed as queer caloused dimples in an expanse of fat when she held her arms straight. Her face was large and round, while her features were small and her hair was scant over her smooth brow; and she had that placid look of a fat woman who has seen her duty and done it.

She sat comfortably on the edge of the porch with her feet on the step below, resting her arms on her knees. Occasionally she would raise a hand to brush back an errant wisp of hair or to fan aimlessly at a mosquito; and once she slapped determinedly at her fat ankle, after which she rubbed the place where she had slapped, to see if she had got the villain. But it was all without rancor, for Sophie Halliday had found her place in the scheme of creation and was filling it contentedly. She let her eyes wander lazily down toward the weeping willow, then observed the moon coming up over Eilert's orchard, and noticed the odor of lilacs in the air. Resolving to pick a pitcher full of them for the house tomorrow she once more wafted back the stray wisp of hair and gave herself up to pleasant agreement with the peace of the evening.

Sophie Halliday was old man Neilandecker's housekeeper, but the old man had long before forgot her function in his household. He considered that she was there for the sole purpose of persecuting him, and he hated her querulously. He looked at her spacious back as she sat in front of him and thought vaguely that she was doing it on purpose just because she knew it would spoil his evening to plump herself down there in front of him. He wished the big fat slob would go somewhere and hang herself instead of sitting there where he couldn't see anything. He always felt that he had some definite grievance against her, and while he could not often bring it to mind, he knew that it existed; and the more he thought the matter over the keener his

displeasure became, until he must either do something to relieve the tension or burst. His hand was tickled by the fringe of the shawl, which brought that article again to mind; and he jerked it off to throw it past Sophie's head into the yard, so as to attract her attention.

"Now, now!" she said soothingly, turning around, "you mustn't throw your shawl away like that, Mr. Neilandecker. Do you want Sophie to take the nice shawl away from you? And then you would be cold, oh! so cold?"

"I told you once I didn't want that durn thing," said the old man.

Sophie got heavily to her feet and retrieved the shawl, which she placed about his shoulders and held there by the two fringed corners.

"Now won't you let it be, so Sophie can sit down and rest?" she pleaded. "Sophie's been working all day putting up nice fruit for Mr. Neilandecker. Sophie's awfully tired."

"Don't care," said the old man.

He tugged feebly at the shawl, but Sophie was too strong for him and he had to give it up.

"Damn," he swore, "damn!"

"Oh, mercy!" said Sophie. "Cursing again? Don't you know what I said I'd do if you cursed? Do you want to go to the bad place?"

"Don't care!" said old man Neilandecker. "Damn! Damn! Damn!"

He had forgotten about the shawl again, so Sophie seated herself once more on the edge of the porch.

"All right," she said, "Mr. Neilandecker is going to the bad place."

"Damn!" said the old man, but with less enthusiasm.

He decided to give up the struggle and to nurse his grievance in silence; and then his attention was attracted by the red light, so he forgot Sophie for the while.

III

A LITTLE bit later a white figure appeared between the gateposts and a contralto voice called, "Yoo-hoo!"

"Haloo!" answered Sophie Halliday. "Come on in!"

The figure advanced to the stoop, where it was seen to be a heavy-set lady with black hair combed *a la* pompadour.

"Oh, it's Mrs. Wilson," Sophie said cordially; "I couldn't make out who it was at first. Won't you sit down? I'll get you a cushion."

"No, no, never mind," answered the lady, wheezing a little as she eased herself to the step beside Sophie. "This is perfectly all right for me, Miss Halliday. I just thought I'd drop over for a little visit. Lovely evening, isn't it?"

Her voice was as heavy as a man's, and it was plain that she and Sophie had not known each other very long, since they were both extraordinarily polite and tried to make their language sound cultured, each more than the other, as if they were taking each other's measure.

"Just splendid," agreed Sophie in regard to the evening. "So peaceful and cool out here. Mr. Neilandecker and I were just admiring the moon, coming up there through the clouds."

"I don't care nothin' about the moon," said the old man.

"Oh," said Mrs. Wilson, "is this the old gentleman the ladies were talking about yesterday?"

"Yes, this is he," said Sophie. "Just look, Mr. Neilandecker," she said, raising her voice and twisting the bulk of her body around toward him. "Just look, here's Mrs. Wilson come over to see us. Won't you say good evening to Mrs. Wilson?"

But old man Neilandecker merely set his rocker to moving to indicate that he heard her, and kept his mouth shut to indicate that he didn't give a care.

"He's like that," said Sophie to Mrs. Wilson, perhaps a bit proudly. "Sometimes he doesn't know a thing about what's going on around him."

"I do, too. I heard every word you said," objected the old man.

"Well, then, won't you say good evening to Mrs. Wilson, that's come to live in the Eilert place, like a nice old gentleman?"

But old man Neilandecker looked off at the red signal light and would say no more.

"That's the way he is," said Sophie. "Such a trial!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Wilson sympathetically, "Tom's father was the same way before he died. He would get stubborn streaks and you simply couldn't do a thing with him. He used to put on one shoe every morning and then tuck the other under his arm and swear he couldn't find it; and no one could tell him different. He would hunt all over the place for it until he came to the hen-house and then pretend to find it, and say that I had hid it on him. It was comical to see him, but mercy! what a trial."

"I ain't that far gone yet," remarked old man Neilandecker. "I guess I got sense enough to know when my shoes is on."

"Of course he has," said Sophie soothingly and sweetly, by way of impressing Mrs. Wilson. "Of course he has. Mr. Neilandecker is real nice about his shoes."

"As you say," she went on to Mrs. Wilson, "it's a trial and a burden. But I always feel it's the Lord's will, and as long as I'm able I'll do it. As I told them at the Aid yesterday, they don't understand. They all had homes of their own, with fathers and mothers. I never knew my parents; I was found and brought to an orphan asylum, and lived there till I was fourteen, and then Mr. and Mrs. Neilandecker came and got me, and I've lived here ever since. And just as long as he wants it Mr. Neilandecker can stay here and I'll stay with him. I can do that much to pay him back, anyway. My conscience wouldn't let me do anything else. I know, just as sure as if an angel appeared right there by that lilac bush and told me so, that I'm doing the Saviour's work here. This is my cross, and I'm carrying it. The reverend thinks so, too. He often remarks about it."

"Yes, a person does feel that way," said Mrs. Wilson. "I know when Tom's father was alive—"

"Every time I go to the Aid they start in on me," said Sophie, "and try to tell me I ought to stop sacrificing myself this way. They think I ought to send him up to the Blunden Home for the Aged, along with the rest of the old men. I ain't saying but what he'd get good care there, for I know it's a worthy place. It costs a good bit to get them in there. But, as I say, I know what them places are like, and as long as I live Mr. Neilandecker will have somebody of his own to take care of him. This is his home, and here he shall stay."

"This ain't any home of mine," said the old man. "I ain't wantin' to stay here."

"Why, Mr. Neilandecker, you know that ain't so!" said Sophie.

"It is, though, in a way," she went on to Mrs. Wilson. "The place has belonged to me now for I don't know how many years."

"Is *that* so?" said Mrs. Wilson in polite surprise.

"Yes," answered Sophie. "I'll tell you how it come about. Two or three years after Mrs. Neilandecker died, Mr. Neilandecker found he had just about lived up all his money. He always said, seeing he didn't have any children, that he didn't intend to leave any money for anybody else to fight over when he died, so after he sold his farm and moved into town and got this house he just put what he had in the bank and lived it up. Well, it all went and he had to mortgage the house. And then all of that got spent. So he went into town and saw Mr. Prescott—you know Mrs. Prescott, she's the lady with the glasses that had on a dark green waist yesterday—and arranged to sell the place. He was—all right—then, you understand. Well, he never said a word to me about it, but I happened to see Mrs. Prescott and she told me. He had it in his head that he was a burden on me, and he was going to get enough money to buy his way into the Blunden home. You know for a certain amount they will take you in up there and keep you as long as you live.

"Well, as I was saying, I had been

with them about twenty-five years, and they always paid me well and I had everything I wanted, and I never was much for spending money; so I had quite a lot saved up in the bank. So I went to Mr. Prescott—he held the mortgage—and told him how it was, and he fixed it so I bought the place and paid off the mortgage. And then I put a stop to his going to the Blunden home. He didn't want me to, he was so set on not being a burden to anybody, but I kept him here almost by main force. He'll never want a home as long as Sophie Halliday lives."

"Isn't that lovely!" breathed Mrs. Wilson.

"Well, I feel it's my duty. The girls are after me about it all the time. They say I oughtn't to sacrifice myself, that I ought to get married and be raising a family of my own—"

"You couldn't get married," said old man Neilandecker irascibly, "there ain't nobody would have you. You're too durn fat."

"Now, Mr. Neilandecker," Sophie chided gently, "is that any way to talk?"

"I should say not," laughed Mrs. Wilson. "Being fat is no disgrace. If it was I'd have to hang my head myself."

Sophie laughed softly. "Well, I'm no lightweight, to tell the truth," she said, "but I'm comfortable and I ain't torturing myself trying to get skinny, like some women."

"No, nor me neither," said Mrs. Wilson.

And the conversation lost interest for old man Neilandecker.

IV

SHORTLY after his wife died—and old man Neilandecker had forgotten how many years ago that was—he had made a visit to the Blunden home to see Jim Whitaker, who went there after his daughter married the second time.

Dimly and with confusion he still remembered the visit and that he had liked the place. There was a great

building of red bricks set in white mortar, with a slate roof, rows of windows with small panes and gleaming white frames, and a door with round white pillars. The grounds were large and smoothly green with clipped and rolled lawns and clean, white walks which twisted prettily among clumps of bushes and tended formal garden plots. No fences were to be found on the place, but only well-laid stone walls; for one of the old men had been interested in that kind of work and under his direction a gang had amused themselves building them. The place was well kept and beautiful, for although no old man need do a tap if he did not wish to, nearly all of them liked to putter around, and took pride in the appearance of the place.

Old man Neilandecker had been escorted all around by the proud Jim Whitaker, who seemed to think he owned the place. He had even lunched with the old men, in a long white room with queer, colorful pictures on the walls. The painter, Jim Whitaker said, had died two years before, and had been a funny fellow. After lunch old man Neilandecker had gone to a sort of pergola under which some old men sat to smoke and digest and talk and play checkers, and two of them almost had a fight over who did the most at the battle of Gettysburg, although old man Neilandecker, who had been there himself, knew they were both liars.

Among the others he saw Uncle Amos, whose nose gleamed red in an aureole of white hair and beard. He sat bent over an ancient gnarled cane and watched anxiously across the fields, where two young fellows were plowing with a tractor.

"Them fields wa'n't never intended to be plowed with any such hootinnanny as that," he said worriedly. "It ain't meant, that's all, it ain't meant." And he complained about it all afternoon.

The checker game had interested old man Neilandecker, for one time he, too, had known himself as a checker player. The game was between a burly old fellow, clean shaven and close cropped,

with a pugnacious Irish look about him; and a tall, thin gentleman in a long coat, who wore a goatee and a mustache. They played evenly and old man Neilandecker watched with interest—so much so that when the burly man moved into a trap whereby he lost three men, old man Neilandecker jumped to his feet and shouted a warning. Then there had been dead silence and everybody looked at him.

"I believe, sir, that you are not a member of this institution?" said the old man in the long coat.

"I know I ain't, but I can play checkers," said old man Neilandecker.

"Only members are supposed to take part in these games," said the old man.

"Yeah, you better keep still if you want to sit around here," said the burly man; and after that no one would pay any attention to old man Neilandecker.

This made him so angry that he had Jim Whitaker take him to the office of the home, where he made inquiries and tentatively arranged to enter the home himself before the summer was over. He would show the old buzzards a thing or two about a checker game.

Old man Neilandecker was finding life tasteless, anyway. In his own time the whole town and county knew of him and he had a reputation to keep up, a reputation gained in his youth, when he had roistered and fought and been a trouble to women. Now all this was forgot, and he was a jest among the younger men, who overrode him and patronized him. So the home, set up on a hill whence the old-timers could look down their contempt upon a cheaper age, seemed like a haven to him. Here, no doubt, he could maintain the prestige that young men denied him, for here were his contemporaries, among whom he amounted to something.

He decided he would realize what he could from his property, get rid of Sophie Halliday, who was beginning to think that he existed for the express purpose of letting her bother him, and spend his declining years in the home. He had seen Prescott at once, and arranged everything; and then suddenly

he found himself completely in Sophie's power. He raged and stormed and threatened, but to no good; Sophie's gratitude was adamant. When he said he wanted to go, Sophie pretended to think that he was being considerate of her, that he didn't like to be a burden; and she refused to hear of him leaving the house. Twice he tried to run away, but she had let it be known all over town that he was childish, so that people caught and brought him back.

But all this was many years ago, and now he had forgot most of it, except in disconnected memories that meant little to him. But he always knew that he hated Sophie.

V

HE became aware of the two women talking.

"—and that isn't all," Sophie was saying. "Of course he was past fifty when I came—and, do you know, some people say there's something mysterious about the way he picked me out from all the other children. I often think of that when they tell me I'm wasting my life, that for all I know I might be taking care of my own—well, you know how it is. But as I was saying, people like me, that don't know about their own parents, we aren't like you others. Of course I've had it pleasanter than some. Just once a man called me a name—you know what I mean—and old as he was at the time, Mr. Neilandecker whipped him right in courthouse square and brought him out and made him get on his knees to me. The man couldn't walk, and he had to put him in a wagon, and everybody in town followed them; and as soon as he took it back he fainted, and almost died afterward. But after that nobody ever let on but what I was the same as the rest of the girls in town. Of course I always behaved myself—even a little bit more careful than anybody else. That makes a difference."

"Yes, I should say," said Mrs. Wilson. "Well, I never did see the sense of visiting the sins of the parents on the children, anyway."

"No," said Sophie, "but at the same time I feel that in a way I'm making up for the sin of my parents when I take care of Mr. Neilandecker here. Some way I feel it's the Lord's will, and I'll do it, no matter what they say."

Mrs. Wilson made a grunt of sympathy and approval.

"But as I was saying," Sophie went on, "when he was young he must have been a terror to stumps, although, of course, he's always been the best in the world to me. People have forgotten about it now, but I've heard tales. He was one of the biggest men in town and they say he could whip two men of his size, and did it more than once. And as far as women were concerned—"

"Who's that you're talking about?" demanded old man Neilandecker.

"Now you just guess who!" said Sophie playfully. Mrs. Wilson laughed.

"Couldn't of amounted to much," said old man Neilandecker. "I never heard of him before."

Then both ladies laughed and old man Neilandecker contemptuously withdrew his attention from them again.

Gradually he brought to mind the Blunden Home, and that he had wanted to go there to live; and he thought about it until it seemed that he had just seen Prescott the day before, had sold his house, and was ready to leave. The idea grew in his mind until he thought he had better pack his clothes; so he slowly got to his feet. The two women stopped talking.

"Ready for bed, Mr. Neilandecker?" asked Sophie, getting up.

"Well, I'll run along," said Mrs. Wilson. "I'll see you again."

"Don't rush off," said Sophie. "I'll be down again in a minute."

But Mrs. Wilson said she had to get up early in the morning, and she would come over again some other night. She said good night and went down the path.

"I got to pack my clothes," announced old man Neilandecker.

"Pack your clothes? Well, what next! What for?" asked Sophie.

The old man thought hard for a moment. He had quite forgot his object, and it came to him slowly.

"Goin' to show them old buzzards how to play checkers," he said.

"And he has to pack his clothes to play checkers with buzzards! Well of all things!" said Sophie kindly. She took his arm and led him inside.

"Don't you want to go to bed and have a nice sleep first?" she asked.

"Naw, got to pack my clothes," said the old man.

"All right, first thing in the morning," agreed Sophie. "But right now I think we better go to bed, don't you?"

She held him firmly by the arm and led him to his bedroom.

Old man Neilandecker sat on the edge of the bed and thought it over while Sophie lit the lamp; but his project escaped him. Everything left his mind except that he hated her.

The fringe of the shawl touched his hand and he suddenly jerked it off to throw it across the room.

"I don't want that durn thing," he said.

"All right," said Sophie, sitting down in a chair, "we won't have it then. Now stick up your foot and I'll take your shoes off. That's the way, upsiedaisy. Now the other one. . . ."

And Sophie Halliday put old man Neilandecker to bed.



IT'S funny how a woman will trust her body and soul in the hands of a man whose own mother wouldn't trust with a nickel.



Tragedy

By Bertram Bloch

MR. TWOMBLEY, the cashier of the Millville Trust Company, sat behind his little wicket, smiling at the friendly depositors as they passed, and planned to rob the bank.

The brass band of the circus and the unusually blue sky had decided him. Not that Mr. Twombley realized this. He believed that his decision was the logical result of days of interrogation and self-analysis. And that was true in a way. It was a full six months since his soul had awakened to a sense of its dissatisfaction—its disgust—with the upright, psalm-singing, palm-rubbing, always-to-be-trusted, black-cravatted, sycophantic Arthur Twombley, who housed it.

For twenty years his soul—a soul that at nineteen had been filled with the romantic ardor of a Roland—had been somnolent, permitting its adventurous dreams to be turned into strawberry festivals and Bible meetings. But as the fortieth year of its existence drew to a heavy-footed close, the soul awoke, and cried aloud for its heritage.

What Arthur Twombley said to himself was nothing like the above. He told himself he was simply fed-up with impecunious righteousness. Some men splashed the canvas of their lives with scarlet and silver and wine-colored sins, and he—he prayed for them, the while his life remained a leaden gray. Others adventured forth, met golden fortune and were welcomed home in triumph by the town, and he—he raised the funds for the ever-present banquet. "Twombley of course; nobody one-half so trustworthy as Twombley."

Well, he was sick of Millville and its profound faith in him, sick of being

trusted indiscriminately with wives, daughters, money and umbrellas; sick of being elected to every subordinate position in the social and economic life of the town that required industry and honesty and was paid for in the pale, unsatisfactory coin of reflected glory and an occasional line in an annual report thanking "our brother Arthur Twombley for his unceasing endeavor and faithful services."

His hair was growing thin; his breath was scanted than a year ago. A little longer and it would be too late. For months he had known this, yet dared not act.

Then came the day when the sky was so unusually blue, when underneath the blaring tones of the circus band sounded the pipes of Pan. The white road to the hills begged for dancing feet, and the brass band played the tunes to dance to.

The gay cafés of Paris, the climbing streets of Naples were beyond the hills. The waters of the Mediterranean were blue, they said, blue as that unusually blue sky; the shepherds in red-braided tunics and bare knees sold wine on the hillsides of Greece and played gay songs on their flutes—as gay as the music of the circus band, and softer. . . . What time was it now in Benares, he wondered, and would he too wear a pith helmet and a white drill suit.

The night came, misty and tender; the music of the band, playing on the lot outside the town, was softened, inviting.

Mr. Twombley tossed his cigar away with a flippant gesture as he entered the bank to rob it. He hummed as he passed among the shadows. What a shock the good, faithful, uncomplaining,

hard-working Mr. Twombly was about to give the townspeople of Millville! He could see their gaping, astonished faces. They would say there had been a woman in the case, no doubt. They always said that. Well, there was, in a way. Not one woman, but scores; beautiful women, gay women, the women of France, of Italy, of the East. But there was more to his flight than that. There was—

He heard a sound from the direction of the vault. He peered intently. The shadows separated and one came hurtling toward him. The next moment he was grappling with an iron-handed monster. Fear gripped him, and he yelled aloud. A fist crashed against his jaw; his head, snapped back, struck the marble wall. He lost consciousness.

Forty-eight hours later he awoke. He was in the white bed of a hospital room. He was alone, but outside the door of his cubicle, he heard the soft hurrying

of nurses. He raised his head, discovering quickly that it was bandaged. On the chair beside the bed lay an unfolded newspaper. He turned feebly to read the date. Two days had elapsed since—. A name caught his eye; his name.

TWOMBLEY REWARDED.

Ignoring the twinge of pain, he pulled himself closer to the edge of the bed:

At a special meeting today the Directors of the Millville Trust Company passed the following resolution: "Be it resolved that, in recognition of his faithful services in guarding the bank from robbery by two burglars on the evening of the 15th of July, the salary of Arthur Twombly, cashier of the bank, be raised two hundred dollars per annum, the increase to take effect as soon as said Arthur Twombly is discharged from the hospital." The entire board then joined the president, Mr. Robinson, in a fervent prayer that the injured cashier might soon be able to return to duty.



The Fortunate

By Bernice L. Kenyon

YOU who arise from sordid ways,
Constructing complicated art
From bitterness that haunts your days
And goads your heart,

Fashioning for some gainless end
(To satisfy what cryptic whim?)
Beauty no mocking can amend
Nor terror dim.

Think on our trouble and our fright:
We are the disillusioned ones,
Whose weak hands grope toward flecks of light
That once were suns;

We shall go out and leave no mark,
Who never dreamed that we might feel
Fate crushing us beneath her dark
Oblivious heel.

The Seventh Veil

By George Jean Nathan

I

AS a critic, it has never been my aim or purpose to convince anybody, including myself. My sole effort has been to express personal opinions grounded upon such training and experience and the philosophy deduced therefrom as I may possess. Since I personally am not fool enough to believe finally in everything that I happen at the moment to believe, however stoutly, I am not fool enough to wish to convince anyone finally in matters that, at their very best, are in all probability of a dubious truth. I please myself to believe that the critic who has another aim is a vainglorious and often absurd figure. One is a good critic in the degree that one is able to answer vacillating and quibbling doubt with determined and persuasively positive doubt. Criticism is the prevailing of intelligent skepticism over vague and befuddled prejudice and uncertainty. It answers no riddle: it merely poses an oppugnant and contradictory riddle. When the critic ceases to have self-doubts, he ceases to be a critic and becomes a college professor.

II

THE critic who is expert in the manipulation of logic appreciates the infinitely superior value of the tricky and specious argument as opposed to the simple and sound argument. Sound arguments, in the assault of logic upon the herd head, are doomed to more or less dismal failure. If the mob is to be persuaded, it must be

persuaded by suave chicane containing a mere slight jazzy counterpoint of logic—hard logic, stripped to the buff, can accomplish nothing. What the mass of the public wants is not constructive evidence, tough facts and straight-line reasoning but evidential sky-rockets, pin-wheels and flower-pots. The critic of the arts, if he is of the species that wishes to convert his readers to his way of thinking—if he is, in other words, idiotically imbued with the messiah-pox—must conduct himself much the same as a propagandist in wartime. He must lie convincingly; he must deftly distort the facts; he must perform elaborately as a country fair hypnotist performs; but he must not permit himself to be found out. His criticism must be a shrewd, deceptive, plausible and irresistibly spurious amalgam of æsthetic gold bricks, spook photography, death-bed visions, covered carpet tacks and Hindoo mango-tree growing set into a frame of substantial but mild and very easily assimilable dialectics. The so-called influential critic is not the critic who tells the truth as he sees it in terms of the truth, but more often the one who tells the truth as he sees it in terms of the truth as others see it. He may write what he believes, but he is careful first to filter it through the minds of those whom he is addressing. This is the “as we all well know,” “as you will surely agree,” “those of us who,” “as for the rest of us” type of critic. One finds him everywhere. He is the critical go-getter, good-mixer, back-slapper. And, like a competent shoe

drummer, he gets what he goes after.

In the matter of the value of the showy argument as against the sound, I am always reminded of a murder trial that I covered eighteen or nineteen years ago in a little town in New Jersey. A physician was charged with having killed his wife by giving her drugs whose action and effect were indistinguishable from those of ptomaine poisoning. Things looked pretty bad for the defendant and, up to the time the counsel for the defense began its cross-examination of the star witness for the State, the odds were heavy on the man's conviction for murder in the first degree. The testimony of the star witness for the prosecution had dangerously riddled the defensive armor. This witness had previously sworn that he, a stranger in the little town, had arrived in the town on the night of the alleged murder. It was the first time he had ever been in the little town. He had left the next morning and had not been back since summoned as a witness by the prosecution. On the night in question, he testified, he had got off the train at the depot and had walked up the main street of the town and gone directly to the accused's house. If the defense could shoot a hole through this testimony, it well appreciated that it would go a long way toward convincing the jury of the innocence of its client.

Among the four attorneys for the accused was a little, bewhiskered, taciturn yokel of some fifty years who, it had been observed, hadn't so much as opened his mouth once since the beginning of the trial. None of the newspapermen present could solve the mystery of his presence: he seemed a sheer wanton waste of good money on the part of the defendant. The cross-examination of the important star witness for the State proceeded—the usual questionings and re-questionings. These all centered upon his presence in the little town on the night in point. The cross-examination had been going on

for about five weary hours when suddenly the little bewhiskered yokel lawyer who hadn't thus far spoken a single word hopped to his feet, brushed back the other attorneys for the defense, and approached the man in the witness box.

"You say that you got out at the depot and walked directly up the main thoroughfare of this city to the defendant's residence?" he inquired.

The witness nodded.

"Well, then," asked the little lawyer, "tell the gentlemen of the jury what you saw when you walked up the main thoroughfare."

The witness, somewhat perplexed, replied that he had seen nothing.

"What, nothing!" exclaimed the little lawyer. "You saw *nothing*?"

Nothing, answered the witness.

"Do you mean to say that you can face the jury and deliberately say that you saw nothing"—here the little lawyer paused dramatically—"nothing *unusual*?"

The witness, nonplussed, again made negative answer.

The little lawyer turned to the jury:

"You have heard the witness say, gentlemen of the jury, that he walked up the main street of our city and yet saw absolutely nothing in the least unusual. I ask you, gentlemen, can you therefore for one moment believe that this witness has told the truth and that he actually was in our city on the night he says he was? You certainly cannot. For if he had been here and had, as he says, walked up the main thoroughfare he could not possibly—he could not *conceivably*—have missed seeing the fine three-story school-building which we have recently erected!"

The jury, composed of villagers who had paid out their good taxes for the little school-building and were immensely proud of it as one of the real sights of their little town, smiled back their agreement. Their eventual verdict—a unanimous one—was not guilty.

III

It is often argued against the dramatic critic that his judgment becomes warped through a surfeit of the theatre, that since he is compelled to go to play upon play night upon night that judgment, calloused through repetition and satiety, is bound to become unduly influenced and hence devitalized by the man's personal impatience, cumulatively blasé point of view and physical fatigue. This is nonsense. Were it true, the same argument might be applied with equal force against the reliability of the doctor, surgeon and criminal lawyer in constant practice. If my critical judgment and practising skill are corrupted by my being forced to sit successively through fifty idiotic plays, what of the critical judgment and practising skill of the doctor who is called upon successively to attend fifty women whose only trouble is that they do not love their husbands, of the surgeon who is forced successively to perform fifty minor operations in the region of the spankspot, and of the criminal lawyer who is compelled successively to defend fifty plainly innocent clients against the eloquence of some shyster prosecutor in a poke collar?

IV

VERY young men and very old men alone are cocksure. The soundest of critics is thus the man of middle years. He has temporarily outgrown the cocksureness of his youth and he is still this side of the cocksureness of age. He is temporarily free from empty prejudice, free from youth's revolt and from age's revolt against revolt, and beset by a healthy skepticism and doubt. He is of open mind; he is without indignations; he doesn't give a damn.

V

THE value of a detached point of view in artistic creation seems to me

to be absurdly overestimated. Truly great art is the product of passionate interest and hot enthusiasm. That interest and enthusiasm may affect a cool and self-condescending smile, and that smile may in turn be interpreted as the smile of detachment, but it is never—save in the instance of the second-grade artist—anything of the kind. A tonic detached philosophy is not necessarily the fruit of a detached point of view. It is more often the fruit of a positive point of view which, to its own pleasurable inexpectation and disconcertment, has found itself cut into, half-frustrated and divided into two by the sudden incursion of a point of view that appears to be equally positive in its approach to the truth.

VI

OSCAR WILDE is condemned by a certain school of critics as having been merely very clever. Could criticism reach sillier heights? To be merely very clever was precisely what Wilde strove for and precisely what he successfully achieved. He had no other intent, no other aim. To criticize Wilde for not being a profound philosopher but for being merely very clever is to criticize Kant for not being very clever but merely a profound philosopher.

VII

I HAVE observed that when our novelists sell themselves to the movies they proclaim and endorse the artistic status and future of the movies after something like the following schedule:

1. If they have received \$5,000 from the movies for their novel, they content themselves with declaring that "the moving pictures are still in their infancy."
2. If they have received \$7,500, they elaborate a bit and declare that "since the moving pictures are still in their infancy, it is as yet

unfair to judge them finally from an artistic point of view."

3. If they received \$10,000, they elaborate still more, to wit, that "since the moving pictures are still in their infancy and while it is as yet unfair to judge them finally from an artistic point of view, some fine things have already been done in the movies and these fine things are a happy augury of what the movies may accomplish in the future."
4. If they have received \$12,500 they substitute "many fine things" for "some fine things," change "may accomplish" to "will surely accomplish," and make it read "in the very near future" instead of simply "in the future."
5. If they get \$15,000, they declare flatly that the movies are an art.
6. If they get \$17,500, they elaborate this to read that the movies are as great an art as the drama.
7. If they get \$20,000, they go still farther and say that the movies, "because of their enormous flexibility and fluidity and their consequent ability to do countless things that the stage cannot, are destined to be an even greater art than the drama."
8. If they receive \$25,000, they rush into the public prints to declare that the screen is due someday to supersede the pen and that the novels of the future are destined to be projected directly by the films.
9. If they get \$30,000, they change the "someday" to "very soon."
10. If they receive \$35,000, they embellish the foregoing with statements to the effect that Shakespeare's plays are really moving picture plays unconsciously written in the moving picture form and that if Shakespeare were alive today he surely would write for the screen instead of for the stage.
11. If they get \$40,000, they compare

the moving pictures not only with Shakespeare, but with the work of Praxiteles, Michelangelo, da Vinci, Rubens, Bach, Flaubert and Goethe, to the considerable disadvantage, specifically, of the two last named.

12. If they get \$50,000, they stipulate with unmistakable emphasis that the movies are the great art of all time and that anyone who says that they aren't is simply a disappointed scenario writer who has tried to sell his wares to the movies and has not succeeded.

VIII

THE dramatic critic who concerns himself primarily and elaborately with the actor as opposed to the drama is himself usually something of an actor at heart. He may not always be conscious of the fact, but his readers to a very considerable degree are. They can detect him in the writing act of listening to the sound of his own words, of rolling them with relish upon his tongue, of seeking to make theatrical and magnificently effective literary gestures, and of aiming for the reciprocal applause of those actors whom he writes about. He is what may be called the stage-door John type of critic, baffled and defeated in his sub-conscious wish to be an actor and waiting, flowers in hand, for one more successful, who is himself in the body of another, to come out.

IX

ALTHOUGH I know that it is not commonly so regarded, it has always seemed to me that biography is one of the very highest forms of creative art. Carlyle's "Frederick" is to my mind fully as important an achievement in artistic creation as any one of the Beethoven symphonies, or as any half dozen celebrated autobiographical novels that one chooses to name. As a genuine work of art, it is unquestionably superior to half

the novels written in Spain in the last fifty years and to all the music written in France in the last hundred years.

A great biography has always in it an undertone of autobiography: it is the man in terms of his master. It is the autobiography of an artist's taste, tact, culture and skill in terms of a greater man's taste, tact, culture and skill, or, it may be, in terms of their absence. Strachey's "Queen Victoria," on a lower level, is yet a vastly finer relative example of creative art, I feel, than all of Thomas Lawrence's biographies of royalty composed in oils.

The extreme difficulty of the task that confronts the biographer is made evident by the very few first-rate biographies, as opposed to the hundreds upon hundreds of fifth-rate ones, that line the shelves of the world's library. The average biography is a mere cuckooing of the average biography that has preceded it, as the latter in turn is a mere cuckooing of the biography that has preceded it. It is made up, (1)—as Shaw once pointed out—of "at least two anecdotes, one to illustrate the miraculous powers of the hero's brain, and another to exhibit his courage and dexterity in personal combat"; (2) of a lengthy and very touching description of the profound influence on the hero's life and career that was exercised by his beloved mother; (3) of an account of his early poverty and of the indomitable will and strength of purpose that these early hardships could not break; (4) of the celebrated persons with whom the hero came into contact and of his witty rebuke of one of these who was disposed to be somewhat snobbish; (5) of the news that, though he seemed to be a heavy smoker, he never smoked more than one-half of a cigar; throwing the remaining half away; (6) of an account of all of the hero's affairs of the heart save the really interesting ones; (7) of a story relating how he on a cold winter night

took off his overcoat and gave it to a shivering beggar; (8) of an account of his great grief when his wife died; (9) of a description of his keen sense of humor, his placidity under the most trying conditions, his essentially spiritual nature, and of the fact that even in his last years he belied his age and was as light on his feet as a kitten; (10) of a testimonial to his infallible memory, embellished with an anecdote relating how as a little boy he went into a small candy store in Bangor, Maine, with only a couple of pennies in his pocket and, desiring a stick of candy, was trusted by the old negro woman for the other penny and how, somewhat cryptically—because of the ponderable difference in their ages—he encountered the old woman in Bad Nauheim sixty-one years later, recognized her, went up to her, recalled himself to her and gave her the penny plus a five dollar bill; and (11) and finally, of a number of such observations as "The forces which entered into his life were as the kings and queens and pawns of chess; full of confidence, he played the game," but above all and *imprimis*, "A successful life always means a strong man behind it. Behind every great achievement is a man greater than the achievement. Such a man was Elmer P. Reichschneider!"

Such bushwah is, of course, biography in the sense and in the degree that the inscribed gold watch which employees give to their employer at Christmas-time is a token of their affection, admiration and good will. It is a biography not of a certain man's faults and virtues but an autobiography of a certain other man's weaknesses and boot-lickings. It presents us with the spectacle of a writer following his subject as a small boy follows the resplendent lady bareback rider in a circus parade. The true biography is no such thing. It is the re-creation of one man by another. It is a portrait in articulate oils. It is the tale of a

vivid figure vividly told by a vivid artist. It is, in short, a novel that is a masterpiece of that greatest of all fancy, the fancy of truth and of romantic realism.

X

I HAVE noticed now for the last fifteen years that every time I have set to work on a new book, on that very day has someone started a riveting machine going full blast in my neighborhood.

XI .

THE drama of George Bernard Shaw is criticized as being merely a drama of adroit paradoxes. What else, pray, is much of the drama of Shakespeare, Molière and Ibsen?

XII

POETRY is uncouth, unshaven, boisterous prose afflicted with a crying drunk. Through its empty prose head there suddenly course unsteady visions of its boyhood home, the little red schoolhouse, its first sweetheart and the first kiss in the field of daisies back of the old circus lot, and, passing its hand over its prosy, stubby face, it has a moment of alcoholic self-disesteem and of melancholy repentance for what it thinks it might have been and might have had—had things been other than they are—of an almost unreal happiness. It idiotically and boozily wants something it cannot have, something that, once gone, it can never recapture, and in this mood it sings its futile, foolish, groggy and sometimes very beautiful song.

XIII

I HAVE never been able to make much of the phrase "commercial manager." It is as silly to condemn a theatrical manager for being commercial as it would be to condemn a writer for being readable. If a

theatrical manager is not commercial, he is not a manager. Anyone can manage an enterprise into the poor-house; it takes skill to manage it commercially and prosperously. It is not, further, a case of commercial manager so much as it is a case of commercial public. The manager is simply the business representative of his public. If it is a case of artistic public, it is a case of artistic manager. The commercial manager who would not gladly and quickly be an artistic manager if his public wanted him to be one would be such a bad business man that no one would think of complimenting him as a commercial manager even for a moment. Drama is an art; the theatre is a business. Art calls for artists; business calls for business men. Hauptmann would not know how to run a theatre one-tenth so soundly and, I venture, one-fifth so artistically for that matter, as Morris Gest. He might have much better taste, but there is a difference between creative taste and expository taste. It is one thing to select plays; it is quite another thing to make the public select them.

For every commercial manager, there are five hundred or more commercial playwrights. If you doubt it, go into Al Woods' office and look at the eight-foot piles of manuscripts balanced on the baby grand piano and the spittoons. If there were no commercial playwrights there obviously would be no commercial managers. It is senseless to heap all the blame upon the managers. The theory that the thoroughly estimable and artistic Arthur Hopkins is not a commercial manager but that the Selwyns, less given to artistic enterprises, are commercial managers does not hold much water. The Selwyns rejected Eugene O'Neill's "Anna Christie" on the ground that it wouldn't make any money. Hopkins then as promptly accepted it on the ground that it would. Hopkins was right. The fact that "Anna Christie" is a very good play proves nothing. All that is proved is that Hopkins was a very much more

sagacious commercial manager on this occasion than the Selwyns. The judgment of the latter was indeed so grantedly bad that they do not deserve to be called commercial managers at all. An artist may be a good business man; a good business man may be an artist—or at least a man of decent artistic tastes. If this good business man does not always and invariably follow the dictates of his better tastes he is no more to be censured than a fine poet is to be censured for doing odd jobs on the side in order to make enough money to live comfortably on. To criticize a commercial manager for not wishing to lose all his money in behalf of a public without taste is to posture one's self as a hypocrite and a blockhead.

Let us not proudly point a contradictory finger at the praiseworthy artistic managers of the Theatre Guild too soon. That these artistic managers, by catering to the finer tastes of the public, have made more money than certain of our determined commercial managers is not a sufficient argument until it has been tested for a somewhat longer period. Let the next few years tell the story—a happy one, I sincerely hope. The tombstones in the grave-yard of artistic and uncommercial management are already too numerous, and they bear some familiar names.

XIV

PROFESSOR Dr. Stuart P. Sherman in his latest book, "The Genius of America," subtitled "Studies in Behalf of the Younger Generation," page 115:

At registration time in the fall a very sweet girl from Georgia with a soft Southern voice and soft Southern eyes, fringed like jessamine or honeysuckle, came to me as registration officer, and asked me to waive a college rule in her favor. "I am very sorry," I said, with customary mild severity, "I can't let you do it. I have no authority in the matter." "Well," she replied, "who has? Who can?" And she looked into my eyes with searching and almost painful sweetness. "You might," I said, faltering, "you might go to the Dean. A Dean is the only one that breaks rules. You might ask him, but I doubt if it will do you any good. Our Dean is a very firm man.

He's a New Englander, you know, a Puritan, with a stiff conscience." "Tell me something," she said softly, "will you?" "Yes," I replied, "if I can." I was ready to do anything for her, short of breaking the rule.

"Short of breaking the rule"!

A cruel and searching autobiography in five words. Imagine a man who sets himself up as one aflame with the fire of artistic beauty and passionate to breathe it to the world, imagine a man who wishes to speak to artists with the voice of an artist—imagine such a man afraid to break some trivial little rule of a trivial little school out in the Illinois corn-belt for so utterly pretty and charming a young woman.

XV

INSPIRATION is the catch-word of the second-rate artist. The first-rate artist knows from long and crushing experience that inspiration is not a beautiful elf that comes to him down the chimney at twilight with a wand of gold and stars and roses, but a pad of paper, a dozen lead pencils, a jar of strong tobacco, rolled up sleeves, aching fingers, tired eyes, and hours of bitter misery.

XVI

THERE is a type of critic who thinks primarily in terms of literary composition. When he sits down to record his findings he concerns himself not with recording his findings so much as with recording his own talent as a spinner of prose. What results is neither criticism nor literature. The one gobbles up the other. All that remains is literature invalidated by propaganda and propaganda invalidated by literature.

XVII

GREAT criticism is the child not of tractable presumption but of strong prejudice. The prejudices of one generation are the faiths of the next. The path to sound credence is through the thick forests of skepticism.

New York

By *H. L. Mencken*

I

THE most interesting book that I have explored since our last service is Fremont Rider's "New York City: a Guide to Travelers" (*Holt*), lately reissued in a second and revised edition. I have been plowing through it, in fact, for days, and the end is yet far off. It presents a colossal mass of information about the new capital of Christendom, and that information is admirably sorted out upon the plan invented by Karl Baedeker, to whom Mr. Rider makes graceful acknowledgment in his preface. Almost every conceivable fact about New York is here got into one volume of 670 pages—the origin of all the principal street names, the names of the sculptors who designed the hideous statuary of the town, the exact size and history of the parks, the traffic rules in Fifth avenue, the principal contents of the public museums, the hours when God is wooed and flattered in the churches, and lists of the theatres, concert halls, clubs, restaurants, hotels and office buildings. I can find nothing about bootlegging, a very important matter to strangers who, with provincial shyness, hesitate to apply to the police; perhaps Mr. Rider will add a section upon the subject to his next edition. Meanwhile, I hope, he will be polite to purchasers of the book who call him up at the office of his publishers. He makes up for the lack by bespattering his pages with strange odds and ends—that the Pennsylvania Hotel telephone switchboard has room for 22 operators; that the Woolworth Building weighs 206,000,000

pounds; that St. Bartholomew's Church in Park avenue "replaces one of the largest breweries on Manhattan Island"; that Irving place was named after Washington Irving; that the Hotel Commodore contains 412,000 feet of plumbing pipe; that President Chester A. Arthur took the oath of office at 123 Lexington avenue on September 19, 1881.

Such information, of course, is useless, but so is practically all other information. Nevertheless, human beings always take great delight in amassing it. As for me, reading Mr. Rider's most instructive tome makes my conscience toss and grunt a bit, for the fact is borne upon me that, despite my long familiarity with New York, I really know nothing about the town. The truth is that, like most other persons who visit it regularly and like many who live in it, I confine my habitual travels in it to a very limited area. The region between Forty-second street on the south, Forty-fifth street on the north, Fifth avenue on the east and Sixth avenue on the west I know pretty well—well enough, indeed, to navigate it day or night without lights. It is within that rectangle that I sleep when I am in New York, and there I have my office and eat most of my meals. What lies outside is, in the main, mysterious to me, though I have been making trips around the town for twenty-five years. My glimpses of it, in fact, have never greatly tempted me to explore it more diligently. New York, it seems to me, is a city strangely lacking in physical charm. If it were actually beautiful, as, say, London is

beautiful, then New Yorkers would not be so childishly enthusiastic about the few so-called beauty spots that it has—for example, Washington Square, Gramercy Park, Riverside drive and Fifth avenue. Washington Square, save for the one short row of old houses on the north side, is actually very shabby and ugly. The trees have a mangy appearance; the grass is like stable litter; the tall tower on the south side is ungraceful; the memorial arch is dirty; the whole place looks dingy. As for Gramercy Park, it is celebrated only because it is in New York; if it were in Washington it would not attract a glance. Fifth avenue, to me, seems to be gaudy rather than beautiful. What gives it distinction is simply its spick and span air of wealth; it is the only New York street that is clean. Riverside drive lacks even that; it looks second-rate from end to end. New York is the only great Eastern city that has never developed a characteristic domestic architecture—that is, of any merit. There are neighborhoods in Boston, in Philadelphia, in Baltimore and in many of the lesser cities that have all the charm of London, but in New York the brownstone mania brought down all the side streets to one horrible level of ugliness, and in Fifth avenue there has never been any development of indigenous design, but only a naïve copying of foreign models, most of them bad and all of them inappropriate.

Mr. Rider prints a long bibliography of books about New York, including novels, and says that they are innumerable. Nevertheless, it is a curious fact that relatively few American novelists of any distinction have devoted themselves to it, and that nearly all the serious novels dealing with it are bad, for example, Ernest Poole's "The Harbor," Dreiser's "The 'Genius'" and James Lane Allen's "A Cathedral Singer." Chicago, Boston and San Francisco have offered far greater temptations and opportunities to the novelists; there is no novel about New York that is so good as Frank Norris's "McTeague" or Dreiser's "Jennie Gerhardt."

Perhaps Abraham Cahan's "The Rise of David Levinsky" ought to be remembered here, but in that very excellent tale there is very little New Yorkish flavor; the scene might be shifted to Chicago without changing a single episode. Nine-tenths of the more serious novelists of today seem eager to avoid the city altogether, for example, Cabell, Herrick and Willa Cather; the rest, dealing with it, do so very gingerly, for example, Hergesheimer. What a chance wasted! The fact is that the life of the city is as interesting as its physical aspect is dull. It is, even more than London, Paris or Berlin, the modern Babylon, and since 1914 it has entered upon a period of luxuriousness that far surpasses anything seen in the Paris of the Second Empire. I dare say that, during many a single week, more money is spent upon useless things in New York than would suffice to run the kingdom of Denmark for a year. All the colossal accumulated wealth of the United States, the greatest robber nation in history, tends to force itself at least once a year through the narrow neck of the Manhattan funnel. To that bald, harsh island come all the thieves of the Republic with their loot—bankers from the fat lands of the Middle West, lumbermen from the Northwestern coasts, mine owners from the mountains, oil speculators from Texas and Oklahoma, cotton-mill sweaters from the South, steel magnates and manufacturers from the Black Country, blacklegs and exploiters without end—all laden with cash, all eager to spend it, all easy marks for the town rogues and panders.

The result is a social organization that ought to be enormously attractive to novelists—a society founded upon the prodigious wealth of Monte Cristo and upon the tastes of sailors home from a long voyage. At no time and place since the fall of the Eastern Empire has harlotry reached so delicate and yet so effusive a development; it becomes, in one form or another, one of the leading industries of the town. New York, indeed, is the heaven of

every variety of man with something useless and expensive to sell. There come the merchants with their bales, of Persian prayer-rugs, of silk pajamas, of yellow girls, of strange jugs and carboys, of hand-painted oil-paintings, of old books, of gimcracks and tinsel from all the four corners of the world, and there they find customers waiting in swarms, their check-books open and ready. What town in Christendom has ever supported so many houses of entertainment, so many mimes and mountebanks, so many sharpers and cony-catchers, so many bawds and pimps, so many hat-holders and door-openers, so many miscellaneous servants to idleness and debauchery? The bootlegging industry in the town takes on proportions that are almost unbelievable; there are thousands of New Yorkers, resident and transient, who pay more for alcohol every year than they pay for anything else save women. It is astonishing that no Zola has arisen to describe this engrossing and incomparable dance of death. Upton Sinclair once attempted it in "The Metropolis," but Sinclair, of course, was too indignant for the job. Moreover, the era he dealt with was mild and amateurish; today the pursuit of sensation has been brought to a far higher degree of perfection. One must go back to the oriental capitals of antiquity to find anything even remotely resembling it. Compared to the revels that go on in New York every night, the carnalities of the West End of Berlin are trivial and childish, and those of Paris and the Côte d'Azur take on the harmless aspect of a Sunday-school picnic.

II

WHAT will be the end of the carnival? If historical precedent counts for anything, it will go on to catastrophe. But what sort of catastrophe? I refuse to venture upon a prophecy. Manhattan Island, with deep rivers all around it, seems an almost ideal scene for a great city revolution, but I doubt very much that there is any revolutionary spirit in

its proletariat. Some mysterious enchantment holds its workers to their extraordinarily uncomfortable life; they apparently get a vague sort of delight out of the great spectacle that they are no part of. The low-browed New Yorker patronizes fellow low-brows from the provinces even more heavily than the Wall street magnate patronizes country mortgage-sharks. He is excessively proud of his citizenship in the great metropolis, though all it brings him is an upper berth in a dog kennel. Riding along the elevated on the East Side and gaping into the windows of the so-called human habitations that stretch on either side, I often wonder what process of reasoning impels, say a bricklayer or a truckdriver to spend his days in such vile hutches. True enough, he is paid a few dollars more a week in New York than he would receive anywhere else, but he gets little more use out of them than an honest bank teller. In almost any other large American city he would have a much better house to live in, and better food; in the smaller towns his advantage would be very considerable. Moreover, his chance of lifting himself out of slavery to some measure of economic independence and autonomy would be greater anywhere else; if it is hard for the American workman everywhere to establish a business of his own, it is triply hard in New York, where rents are killing high and so much capital is required to launch a business that only Jews can raise it. Nevertheless, the poor idiot hangs on to his coop, dazzled by the wealth and splendor on display all around him. His susceptibility to this lure makes me question his capacity for revolution. He is too stupid and poltroonish for it, and he has too much respect for money. It is this respect for money in the proletariat, in fact, that chiefly safeguards and buttresses capitalism in America. It is secure among us because Americans venerate it too much to attack it.

What will finish New York in the end, I suppose, will be an onslaught

from without, not from within. The city is the least defensible of great capitals. Give an enemy command of the sea, and he will be able to take it almost as easily as he could take Copenhagen. It has never been attacked in the past, indeed, without being taken. The strategists of the General Staff at Washington seem to be well aware of this fact, for their preparations to defend the city from a foe afloat have always been half-hearted and lacking in confidence. Capt. Stuart Godfrey, U. S. A., who contributes the note on the fortifications of the port to Mr. Rider's book, is at pains to warn his lay readers that the existing forts protect only the narrow spaces in front of them—that "they cannot be expected to prevent the enemy from landing elsewhere," *e.g.*, anywhere along the long reaches of the Long Island coast. Once such a landing were effected, the fact that the city stands upon an island, with deep water behind it, would be a handicap rather than a benefit. If it could not be taken and held, it could at least be battered to pieces, and so made untenable. The guns of its own forts, indeed, might be turned upon it, once those forts were open to attack from the rear. After that, the best the defenders could do would be to retire to the natural bomb-proofs in the cellars of the Union Hill, N. J., breweries, and there wait for God to deliver them. They might, of course, be able to throw down enough metal from the Jersey heights to prevent the enemy occupying the city and reopening its theatres and bordellos, but the more successful they were in this enterprise the more cruelly Manhattan would be ill used. Altogether, an assault from the sea promises to give the New Yorkers something to think about.

That it will be attempted before many years have come and gone seems to me to be very likely. The Anglo-American *entente*, despite the vast energy expended upon pumping it up, shows very few signs of healthy development. The truth is that the

fundamental interests of England and the United States are antagonistic, and must always remain so—that at least 50 cents of every dollar that drops into an American pocket has to come out of an English pocket. The English have got on in the world, not by outwitting their rivals in trade, for they lack the commercial skill for that, but by beating them in war. The German bugaboo having been laid, at least temporarily, they are now obviously greatly perturbed by the American bugaboo. The fact that the United States is bursting with riches, that all the money in the world tends to flow in this direction, is a matter that the English newspapers never tire of discussing, usually with ill-concealed disquiet. There is never any hint in these discussions that the prosperity of Uncle Sam is due to sound sense and capacity, or that it is deserved in any other way; always the theory is thrown out that it is due to sharp practises. Thus the moral foundation is laid for a struggle to the death, and I am convinced that it will come as soon as the running-amuck of the French is halted and Europe comes to a safe equilibrium. At the moment the English rear is too insecure to permit of operations on the front, but soon or late the old balance of power on the Continent will be restored, and its hereditary enemies will efficiently police each other. Then the time will come to give attention to the Yankee pickpocket, bully, bluenose and foe to democracy and Christianity.

As a veteran of five wars and a life-long student of military science, I am often made uneasy by the almost universal American assumption that no conceivable enemy could inflict serious wounds upon the Republic—that the Atlantic Ocean alone, not to mention the stupendous prowess of the *Boobo americanus*, makes it eternally safe from aggression. This notion has just enough truth in it to make it dangerous. That the *whole* country could not be conquered and occupied I grant you, but no intelligent enemy would think for a moment of trying to conquer it.

All that would be necessary to bring even the most intransigent patriots to terms would be to take and hold a small part of it—say the part lying to the east and north of the general line of the Potomac river. Early in the late war, when efforts were under weigh to scare the American *booboisie* with the German bugaboo, one of the Allied propagandists printed a book setting forth plans alleged to have been made by the German General Staff to land an army at the Virginia capes, march on Pittsburgh, and so separate the head of the country from its liver, kidneys, gizzard, heart, spleen, bladder, lungs and other lights. The plan was persuasive, but I doubt that it originated in Potsdam; there was a smell of Whitehall upon it. One of the things most essential to its execution, in fact, was left out as it was set forth, to wit, a thrust southward from Canada to meet and support the thrust northwestward. But even this is not necessary. Any invader who emptied New York and took the line of the Hudson would have Uncle Sam by the tail, and could enter upon peace negotiations with every prospect of getting very polite attention. The American people, of course, could go on living without New York, but they could not go on living as a great and puissant nation. Steadily, year by year, they have made New York more and more essential to the orderly functioning of the American state. If it were cut off from the rest of the country, the United States would be in the hopeless position of a man relieved of his medulla oblongata—that is to say, of a man without even enough equipment left to be a father, a patriot and a Christian.

Nevertheless, it is highly probable that the predestined enemy, when he comes at last, will direct his first and hardest efforts to cutting off New York, and then make some attempt to keep it detached afterward. This, in fact, is an essential part of the new higher strategy, which is based upon economic considerations, as the old strategy was based upon dynastic considerations. In the middle ages, the object of war was

to capture and hamstring a king; at present it is to dismember a great state, and so make it impotent. The Germans, had they won, would have broken up the British Empire, and probably detached important territories from France, Italy and Russia, beside gobbling Belgium *in toto*. The French, tantalized by a precarious and incomplete victory, now attempt to break up Germany, as they have already broken up Austria. The chances are that an enemy capable of taking and holding New York would never give it back wholly—that is, would never consent to its restoration to the Union on the old terms. What would be proposed. I venture, would be its conversion into a sort of free state—a new Dantzic, perhaps functioning, as now, as the financial and commercial capital of the country, but nevertheless lying outside the bounds politically. This would solve the problem of the city's subsistence, and still enable the conqueror to keep his hold upon it. It is my belief that the New Yorkers, after the first blush of horror, would agree to the new arrangement and even welcome it. Their patriotism, as things stand, is next to nothing. There is indeed, not a single honest patriot in the whole town; every last man who even pretends to kiss the flag is simply a swindler with something to sell. This indifference to the great heart-throbs of the hinterland is not to be dismissed as mere criminality; it is founded upon the plain and harsh fact that New York is alien to the rest of the country, not only in blood and tastes, but also in fundamental interests—that the sort of life that New Yorkers lead differs radically from the sort of life that the rest of the American people lead, and that their deepest instincts vary with it. The city, in truth, already constitutes an independent free state in all save the name. The ordinary American law does not run there, save when it has been specifically ratified, and the ordinary American *mores* are quite unknown there. What passes as virtue in Kansas is regarded as intolerable vice in New York, and vice

versa. The town is already powerful enough to swing the whole country when it wants to, as it did on the war issue in 1917, but the country is quite impotent to swing the town. Every great wave of popular passion that rolls up on the prairies is dashed to spray when it strikes the hard rocks of Manhattan.

As a free state, licensed to prey upon the hinterland but unharassed by its Crô-Magnon prejudices and delusions, New York would probably rise to heights of very genuine greatness, and perhaps become the most splendid city known to history. For one thing, it would be able, once it had cut the painter, to erect barriers and conditions around the privilege of citizenship, and so save itself from the double flood that now swamps it—first, of broken-down peasants from Europe, and secondly and more important, of fugitive rogues from all the land west and south of the Hudson. Citizenship in New York is now worth no more than citizenship in Arkansas, for it is open to any applicant from the marshes of Bessarabia, and, still worse, to any applicant from Arkansas. The great city-states of history have been far more fastidious. Venice, Antwerp, London, the Hansa towns, Carthage, Tyre, Cnossus, Alexandria—they were all very sniffish. Rome began to wobble when the Roman franchise was extended to immigrants from the Italian hill country, *i.e.*, the Arkansas of that time. The Hansa towns, under the democracy that has been forced upon them, are rapidly sinking to the level of Chicago and Philadelphia. New York, free to put an end to this invasion, and to drive out thousands of the gorillas who now infest it—more, free from the eternal blackmail of laws made at Albany and the Methodist tyranny of laws made at Washington—it could face the future with resolution and security, and in the course of a few generations it might conceivably become genuinely civilized. It would still stand as toll-taker on the chief highway of American commerce; it would still remain the premier banker and usurer of the Republic. But

it would be loosed from the bonds which now tend so strenuously to drag it down to the level of the rest of the country. Free at last, it could cease to be the auction-room and bawdy-house that it is now, and so devote its brains and energy to the building up of a civilization.

II

HERMAN SUDERMANN'S "The Book of My Youth," translated by Wyndham Harding (*Harper*), is plainly only the first volume of a work that will run to three or four volumes. It stops, indeed, when Sudermann has barely attained his majority, though the whiskers that have since become his trademark are already in a high state of cultivation. The story, it would appear, of a somewhat vain and bombastic fellow—proud of his beard, proud of his success with the fair sex, proud of his feats upon the duelling-field, proud of his early literary ventures, and even proud of his extremely shady and nonsensical politics. The slip cover of the American edition calls him "the greatest living German dramatist and novelist," a judgment to which, I believe, he would offer no caveat. He is, of course, nothing of the sort. Hauptmann, to name only one rival, is a vastly more competent dramatist; even the German middle classes have begun to see through the shallowness of Sudermann's masterpiece, "Heimat" (done into English as "Magda"). In his character as novelist, he belongs in the second rank, and he is certainly not near the top of it. His "Frau Sorge" is realism brought down to the level of a lecture on pathology, and his "Das Hohe Lied," a far better though less successful book, is a hopeless mixture of the brilliant and the obvious, the boldly imaginative and the cheap. The other novels, "Der Katzensteg" and "Es War," fall even lower, though the former has sold 160,000 copies in the original, and is, in fact, the most popular of all Sudermann's books, next to "Frau Sorge." The best work he has ever done, I believe, is in the book of short stories

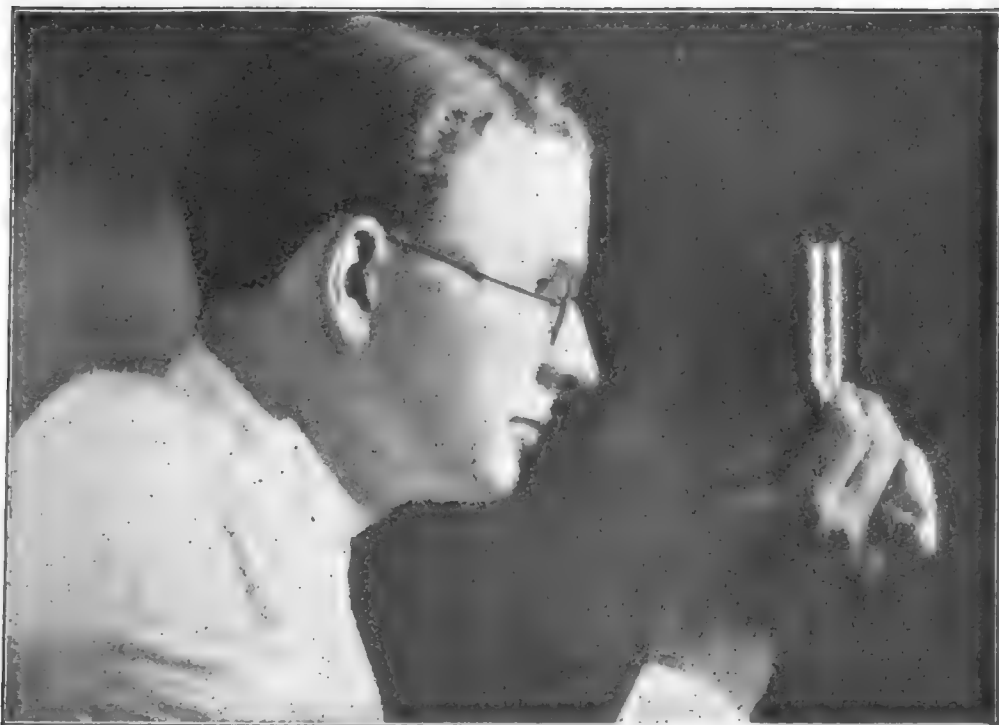
called "Die Indische Lilie." Two of the stories in that collection, "Der Lebensplan" and "Das Sterbelied," are absolute masterpieces. Nothing better has been done in our time, even in English, the language of the short story. One may mention them in the same breath with Joseph Conrad's "Youth," and not be absurd. No other modern German, save perhaps Ludwig Thoma, has ever approached them, and Thoma did it only once.

Sudermann's chronicle in this first volume of his autobiography has to do with his childhood in a remote East Prussian village on the borders of Lithuania, his schooling in the small towns of that bleak province, his early university days at Königsberg, his advance upon Berlin, and his early struggles there. His father was the proprietor and whole staff of a microscopic brewery in his native village—a brewer so little resembling the norm of his kind that he was often barely able to give his children enough to eat. Young Sudermann thus grew up under the shadow of poverty, and it made him, when he came to manhood one of the most anomalous and unhappy objects on God's green footstool, a Prussian democrat. Imagine a Georgia Republican, a Jewish Ku Kluxer, an atheist archbishop, and you have come near but not quite to imagining his brother. One can sense the implacable, hopeless war between conviction and instinct in Sudermann's ego. As a Prussian he is a man of order and discipline, a firm adherent of the monarchical principle, a strict upholder of tradition, a congenital believer in a complex system of castes; as a democrat he is loose and lazy, a member of a mob, a flirter with the madness of equality. I have a suspicion that if he had been more prosperous as a student he would have shed his democracy with his early yearning to be a poet. But fate used him rather harshly, he took to evil courses, and the upshot was that he lost his degree—a blow as devastating to a good Prussian as the loss of her virtue to a Dunkard maiden. Thereupon he took to journalism—the

last refuge of broken intellectuals, in Germany as in America—and became an ornament of what Bismarck denounced as the *Reptilienpresse*. Young Sudermann, in fact, was probably one of the pressmen at whose heads the old Chancellor's blasts were actually aimed, for he sat in the press-gallery of the Prussian Abgeordnetenhaus during the debates of the seventies, and it was by his skilful distortion of the day's news in favor of liberty, democracy and the rights of man that he made his first noise in the world.

Looking back after forty-five years, he is frank enough to confess to his chicanery, and even to pay some grudging compliments to Bismarck, who wiped up the floor with the democrats every time the combat was joined. Sudermann, however, still professes to hold democratic views, and even strives to reconcile his early doctrine that Germany needed another Jena with the present state of affairs. Prussians are a stiff-necked folk; the democrats among them are just as hard to convert as the *Junker*, and a great deal less plausible in maintaining their own case. But those turbulent and happy days, of course, were not devoted wholly to sophisticating the news for the journals of the Left; young Hermann, his whiskers supporting him, also devoted himself to a general campaign among the ladies, and in his book he describes some of its sieges and forays. The English translation, unluckily, is somewhat bowdlerized here. There are disconcerting gaps in it, and they are not very deftly concealed. Worse, it abounds in howlers. For example, on page 363 Mr. Harding translates "Das Hohe Lied" as "The High Hymn," surely one of the worst imbecilities ever put upon paper, even by the dreadful crew of translators. Somewhere else he turns *Landesdirektor* into *land director*, another little masterpiece. But the general sense and drift of the narrative is sufficiently well preserved. It is the story of a man who has always missed greatness, but it is readable and instructive, nevertheless.

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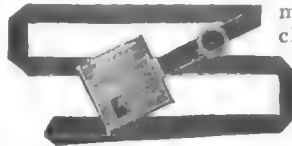
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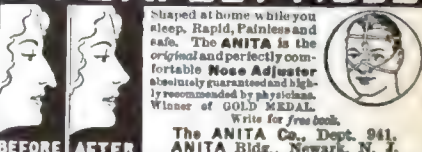
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Finding "The Fountain of Youth"

Along-Sought Secret, Vital to Happiness, Has Been Discovered.

By H. M. Stunz

*Alas! that spring should vanish with the rose!
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!*
—OMAR KHAYYAM.

A SECRET vital to human happiness has been discovered. An ancient problem which, sooner or later, affects the welfare of virtually every man and woman, has been solved. As this problem undoubtedly will come to you eventually, I urge you to read this article carefully. It may give you information of a value beyond all price.

This newly revealed secret is not a new "philosophy" of financial success. It has to do with something of far greater moment to the individual—success and happiness in love and marriage—and there is nothing theoretical, imaginative or fantastic about it, because it comes from the coldly exact realms of science and its value has been proved. It "works." And because it does work—surely, speedily and most delightfully—it is one of the most important discoveries made in many years. Thousands already bless it for having rescued them from lives of disappointment and misery.

The peculiar value of this discovery is that it removes physical handicaps which, in the past, have been considered inevitable and irremediable. I refer to the loss of youthful animation and a waning of the vital forces. These difficulties have caused untold unhappiness—failures, shattered romances, mysterious divorces. True happiness does not depend on wealth, position or fame. Primarily, it is a matter of health. Not the inefficient "half-alive" condition which ordinarily passes as "health," but the abundant, magnetic vitality of superb manhood and womanhood.

Unfortunately, this kind of health is rare. Our civilization rapidly depletes the organism and, in a physical sense, old age comes on when life should be at its prime. But this is not a tragedy of our era alone. Ages ago a Persian poet voiced



humanity's immemorial complaint that "spring should vanish with the rose" and the song of youth too soon come to an end. And for centuries before Omar Khayyam wrote his immortal verses, science had searched—and in the centuries that have passed since then has continued to search—without halt, for the fabled "fountain of youth," an infallible method of renewing energy lost or depleted by disease, overwork, worry, excesses or advancing age.

Now the long search has been rewarded. A "fountain of youth" has been found! Science announces unconditionally that youthful vigor can be restored quickly and safely. Lives clouded by weakness can be illuminated by the sunlight of health and joy. Old age, in a sense, can be kept at bay and youth made more glorious than ever. And the discovery which makes these amazing results possible is something any man or woman, young or old, can easily use in the privacy of the home.

The discovery had its origin in famous European laboratories. Brought to America, it was developed into a product that has given most remarkable results in thousands of cases, many of which had defied all other treatments. In scientific circles the discovery has been known and used for several years and has caused unbounded amazement by its quick, harmless, gratifying action. Now, in convenient tablet form, under the name of Korex compound, it is available to the general public.

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Dull Hair

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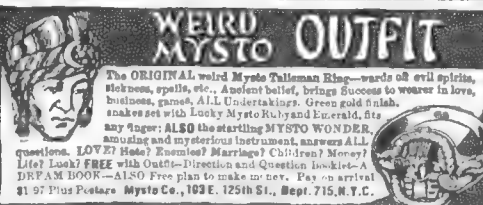
Practically every woman has reasonably good hair—satisfactory in quantity, texture and color. So-called dull hair is the result of improper care. Ordinary shampooing is not enough; just washing cannot sufficiently improve dull, drab hair. Only a shampoo that adds "that little something" dull hair lacks can really improve it.

Whether your hair is light, medium or dark, it is only necessary to supply this elusive little something to make it beautiful. This can be done. If your hair lacks lustre—if it is not quite as rich in tone as you would like to have it—you can easily give it that little something it lacks. No ordinary shampoo will do this, for ordinary shampoos do nothing but clean the hair. Golden Glint Shampoo is NOT an ordinary shampoo. It does more than merely clean. It adds that little something which distinguishes really pretty hair from that which is dull and ordinary.

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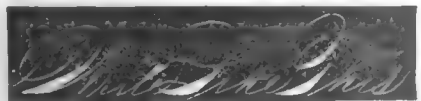


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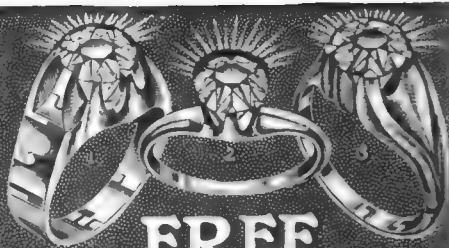
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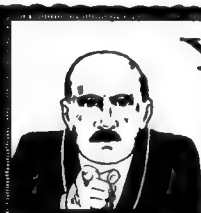
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of fat-reducing Neutroids. Pay the postman only \$2 (a small portion of my regular consult-
ing fee) plus 15 cents postage. If the treatment does not effect a satisfactory reduction, re-
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Dr. R. LINCOLN GRAHAM, care of The Graham Sanitarium, Inc., 123 East 89th St., Dept. 118,
New York City:—Send me 2 weeks' treatment of Neutroids which entitles me to free profes-
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Name.....Age.....Sex.....

Address.....Weight.....

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**Remarkable Scientific Discovery
Makes Glands Active. Easily
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Thousands of men and women who want again the nerve, vigor, virility and ambition of earlier years, are finding all these through science's discovery of an invigorator, stronger and surer than even the famous gland treatment.

The amazing benefits of this discovery are largely confined to the lower spinal nerve centers and certain easily stimulated vital organs and blood vessels. Remarkable improvement is frequently evident within 24 hours and gratifying results are almost always obtained during the first week after treatment starts. Elderly people especially rejoice in their renewed flood of youthful vigor.

Physicians often recommend its use in cases that defy other treatments. Men of 60 say they have been restored to the full vigor of 30.

This remarkable compound is prepared in tablet form for convenient home use. The distributors of Vi-Tabs, which is the name of this invigorator, offer everyone the opportunity of trying a regular \$2.00 double strength treatment with the full understanding that it costs nothing if it fails.

If you wish to secure for yourself the amazing results that it gives, simply send your name and address in strict confidence to the Vi-Tabs Laboratories, Dept. 127, 1018 So. Wabash Ave., Chicago, and this \$2.00 double strength treatment will be immediately mailed to you. Pay postman only \$2.00 and postage when package arrives in plain sealed wrapper. If, at the end of one week, you are not satisfied, the Laboratories will immediately refund your money. This guarantee is protected by deposits in two large Chicago banks, so do not hesitate to accept this offer.



No Deposit

Just send your name, address and finger size, and I will send you this beautiful genuine diamond, 14K solid gold ring on approval. Send no money; pay no C. O. D. Merely accept the ring and wear it a week. Then decide—either return the ring and call the deal closed, or keep it and send only \$3.75 a month until our cut price of \$33.75 is paid. (Regular \$50.00 value.)

Genuine Diamonds

Each ring is solid 14K green gold, with 18K white gold top, exquisitely hand engraved and set with a fine, large, extra brilliant, perfectly cut, blue-white genuine diamond. Order now—at once! Send name, address and finger size. Also kindly give your age and occupation and say whether you want ladies' or men's ring. Write today!

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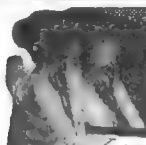
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of the FAMOUS YOUTH-AMI SKIN PEEL PREPARATION. Removes all surface blemishes, Pimples, Blackheads, Eczema, Discolorations, etc. Wonderful results proven. GUARANTEED absolutely Painless and Harmless. Produces healthy, new skin as nature intended you to have. SEND ONLY 10c to cover cost of mailing and packing of FREE TEST BOTTLE and booklet, "THE MAGIC OF A NEW SKIN."



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Is the great secret of the Andressberg.

It will bring back the song of cage birds, will prevent their ailments, and restore them to good condition. If given during the season of shedding feathers it will carry the little musician through this critical period without loss of song. Mailed for 15c. In stamps, 10 page Bird Book 15c, or book and Manna 25c. Sold by all druggists. Small Bird Book Free. THE PHILA. BIRD FOOD CO., No. 400 N. Third St., Philadelphia, Pa.



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A new automatic and self-regulating device has been invented by John A. Stransky, 163 Fourth St., Pukwana, South Dakota, with which automobiles have made from 40 to 57 miles on a gallon of gasoline. It removes all carbon and prevents spark-plug trouble and overheating. It can be installed by anyone in five minutes. Mr. Stransky wants agents and is willing to send a sample at his own risk. Write him today.—Adv.



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Just to advertise our famous Hawaiian im. diamonds—the greatest discovery the world has ever known—we will send absolutely free this 14K gold f. ring set with a 1-2K Hawaiian im. diamond, in beautiful ring box, postage paid. Pay postmaster \$1.48 C.O.D. charges to cover postage, boxing, advertising, handling, etc. If you can tell it from a real diamond return and money refunded. Only 10,000 given away. Send no money. Answer quick. Send size of finger. KRAUTH & REED, Dept. 414, 335 W. Madison St., Chicago.

We guarantee merchandise satisfactory or your money back

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.32 calibre, 9 shots. This is the genuine new imported Mauser—not an imitation or "rebuilt" gun. Positive safety device always under the thumb. Weight, 20 ounces, total length 6 inches. The Mauser is guaranteed the most accurate and hardest hitting automatic of its kind. Regular value, \$25.00.

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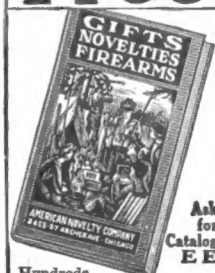
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This fiery, blue-white gem stands all diamond tests. Only an expert can tell the difference. One or three carat size. Set in pure sterling silver; lasts forever. Improve your appearance, and save \$500.00.

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Chevalier "Army & Navy" Field Glasses. Leather covered in carrying case, 8 1/4 in. Regular price, \$18.00. Our price, **\$5.95**

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Hundreds of bargains. This catalog sent free if you write today. AMERICAN NOVELTY CO. 2455-57 Archer Ave. Chicago (Established since 1908)



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Wonderful little phonograph. Plays records up to 10 in. size. Clear, loud tone. Made of metal, enameled and nickel-plated. Size 7 x 8 inches. \$1.00 deposit. Our Price only **\$2.95**

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A real He-Man gun. Beautifully finished new 1923 model 6 shooter, used by Police and Secret Service. Made of fine blue steel, side swing-out cylinder. Hand-checked walnut grips. Very accurate and absolutely guaranteed in every way. Weight 32 ounces. A \$35.00 value. **\$18.75**



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Beautiful new design, Oriental pearl shower ear drops, in green-gold and silver finish. Comes in handsome plush lined case. One of our most popular numbers. Many other designs shown in our catalog.

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Easy for you to own this beautiful ring or give it as a present. Simply send \$1 to us today.

10 DAYS' FREE TRIAL

Wear ring 10 days and if you don't agree it is an amazing bargain, return it and we will refund your money. If satisfied, pay only \$1 a week until \$32.50 is paid.

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Send on request. Ask for my "pay-when-reduced" offer. My treatment is a simple and efficient fat reducer. It has often reduced at the rate of a pound a day. Let me send you proof at my expense.

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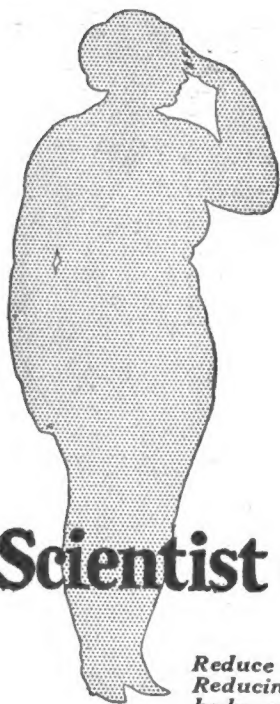
No craving for tobacco in any form after you begin taking Tobacco Redeemer. Don't try to quit the tobacco habit unaided. It's often a losing fight against heavy odds and may mean a serious shock to the nervous system. Let us help the tobacco habit to quit YOU. It will quit you, if you will just take Tobacco Redeemer according to directions. It is marvelously quick and thoroughly reliable.

Not a Substitute

Tobacco Redeemer contains no habit-forming drugs of any kind. It is in no sense a substitute for tobacco. After finishing the treatment you have absolutely no desire to use tobacco again or to continue the use of the remedy. It makes not a particle of difference how long you have been using tobacco, how much you use or in what form you use it—whether you smoke cigars, cigarettes, pipe, chew plug or fine cut or use snuff, Tobacco Redeemer will positively remove all craving for tobacco in any form in a few days. This we absolutely guarantee in every case or money refunded.

Write today for our free booklet showing the deadly effect of tobacco upon the human system and positive proof that Tobacco Redeemer will quickly free you of the habit.

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M. J. MCGOWAN
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Scientist discovers *fat solvent*

Reduce any or every part of your figure with amazing new Reducing Cream which melts away excess fat at any part of the body—slenderizing the figure to perfect proportions without drugs, exercises, diet, rubber suits or painful denial of any kind.

Milady! If you have a single ounce of unwelcome flesh on your figure—here's good news for you. Getting thin is now pleasurable simple and easy for anyone. For I, M. J. McGowan, after five years of tireless research, have made the discovery you have all been waiting for. At last I can tell you positively how to reduce quickly, comfortably—without the bother of tiresome exercises, without the boredom of stupid diet, without resorting to enervating salt baths, without rubber suits or belts. I can actually show you how to make a wonderful change in your figure in 10 days' time or my advice isn't going to cost you one single penny.

If it is a threatened double chin that is making you give up white bread and potatoes—

If your waistline is keeping you away from the tempting bon-bon dish—

If your arms are too plump, your neck padded a bit too well, your ankles bulging, don't worry—I guarantee to reduce any or every part of your body, swiftly and surely—without committing you to any program of painful self-denial.

Amazingly Successful Tests

I am only telling you simple facts. I know exactly whereof I speak. I have experimented to date on many subjects and in the big majority of cases have accomplished perfectly amazing results. I can do the same for you. Indeed, I

am so positive of my ground that I absolutely guarantee results or refund every penny of your money.

My discovery I call Reduceine—McGowan's Reduceine. It is not a medicine, a bath salt or a course of useless gymnastics. No—Reduceine is a pleasant cream that you can apply in the privacy of your own room, patting it gently onto the parts you want to slenderize and almost overnight you will notice a change. A harmless chemical reaction takes place, during which the excess fat is literally dissolved away, leaving the figure slim and properly rounded, giving the lithe grace to the body every man and woman desires.

Read of these astounding results: Case No. 5

Name and address on request
Case number 5 was that of a woman, age 42, who weighed 187 pounds before taking Reduceine treatment. In six weeks' time she had reduced 36 pounds and her figure was trimmed to perfect symmetry throughout.

Case No. 7

Name and address on request
A well-known actor, not greatly overweight but with waistline of 42 inches. A three weeks' Reduceine treatment reduced his waist to 37½ inches, or normal.

Case No. 9

Name and address on application
Business girl, age 28, normal in weight but with distressing double chin. Noticeable improvement the first week and chin line restored to normal in four weeks.

Results Guaranteed or Money Back
My reducing cream is sold under an absolute guarantee that it will accomplish all you expect of it or you may return the empty jar at any time within 60 days and we will refund every penny of your money.

This unparalleled guarantee makes you the sole judge of results. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain by clipping the coupon now. Because of the perishable nature

of the reducing ingredient it is not practical to offer Reduceine through the drug or department stores. I insist that you get only the freshly compounded laboratory product put out under my direct and personal supervision.

When you realize that many of the imitations of Reduceine are now being sold at from \$3.50 to \$10 at retail, you will realize how astoundingly low is the price we ask. This price is made possible only by the fact that we supply you direct from the laboratory, cutting out the big middleman's profit. If you have tried the other old-time methods in vain and really want to reduce any part of your body, give me the chance to help you. You risk nothing—unless you get perfectly astounding results in 60 days—all you have to do is ask for your money back.

Send No Money—Just Sign the Coupon

I am not going to ask you to send one single penny with your order. Just sign the coupon and mail it to me today. By return mail I will send you a 1-pound jar of genuine Reduceine and you can deposit the small sum of \$2.47 (plus a few cents postage) when the postman brings the Reduceine Cream. If you expect to be away from the house when the postman comes, enclose \$2.60 with your order and Reduceine will be mailed to you postpaid.

The McGowan Laboratories,
710 W. Jackson St., Dept. 350,
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. McGowan: I am willing to let you prove to me, at your own expense, that your Reduceine Cream will remove all surplus flesh from my figure. You may send me a full size, 1-pound jar, regular price \$5.00, and I will deposit \$2.47 (plus the few cents postage) with the postman with the understanding that the full amount will be refunded to me at any time within 60 days if I am not satisfied with results.

Name.....

Address.....

If you expect to be away from the house when the postman comes, enclose \$2.60 with your order and Reduceine will be mailed to you postpaid.

IDEAL FIGURE CHART	
12¼"	A slender neck
35"	Well proportioned bust
25"	A trim waist
36"	Slim hips
23½"	Perfectly modeled thighs
14½"	Graceful calf
8½"	Dainty ankles

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Thousands of girls have built up a fresh, clear skin— using these special treatments

Perhaps you feel that your skin is the best that can never be really beautiful. You are wrong! Give your skin special care it needs, and you can see it what you will! Each day your skin is changing; old skin dies and new takes its place. By caring for this new skin in the right way, you can overcome defects that have troubled you for months, even for years.

A special treatment for each type of skin

The right treatment for each different type of skin is given in the booklet, "A Skin You Love to Touch," which is tucked around every cake of Wood-

bury's Facial Soap. (Two of these treatments are reprinted below.)

Get a cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap today, and begin, now, to use the right treatment for your skin. Within a week or ten days you can bring about a marked improvement in your complexion.

The same qualities that give Woodbury's its beneficial effect in overcoming common skin troubles make it ideal for regular toilet use. A 25-cent cake lasts a month or six weeks.

Three Woodbury skin preparations— guest size—for 10 cents

For 10 cents we will send you a miniature set of the Woodbury skin preparations, containing samples of Woodbury's Facial Soap, Facial Cream, and Facial Powder, together with the treatment booklet, "A Skin You Love to Touch."

Send for this set today. Address The Andrew Jergens Co., 7309 Spring Grove Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio. If you live in Canada, address The Andrew Jergens Co., Limited, 7309 Sherbrooke St., Perth, Ont. English Agents: H. C. Quelch & Co., 4 Ludgate Square, London, E. C. 4.



With the right care you, too, can have
"A Skin You Love to Touch"



If your skin is too
sensitive use treatment No. 1
given at the right.

If your skin is sensitive and easily irritated
use treatment No. 2 given at the right.

Perhaps your skin belongs to one of these types—Are you giving it the right treatment?

1. For an oily skin—

EVERY night before retiring, cleanse your skin by washing in your usual way with Woodbury's Facial Soap and lukewarm water. Wipe off the surplus moisture, but leave the skin slightly damp. Now, with warm water work up a heavy lather of Woodbury's Facial Soap in your hands. Apply it to your face and rub it into the pores thoroughly. Rinse with warm water, then with cold. If possible, rub your face for thirty seconds with a piece of ice.

2. For a sensitive skin—

EACH night before retiring, dip a soft washcloth in warm water and hold it to your face. Now make a warm water lather of Woodbury's Facial Soap and dip your cloth up and down in it until the cloth is "fluffy" with the soft white lather. Rub this lathered cloth gently over your skin until the pores are thoroughly cleansed. Rinse first with warm water, then with clear, cool water, and dry carefully.

Get a cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap today—begin your treatment tonight! Within a week or ten days your skin will show marked improvement.

WOODBURY'S FACIAL SOAP

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